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THE
SPAEWIFE:

A TALE OF

THE SCOTTISH CHRONICLES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"ANNALS OF THE PARISH," "RINGAN
GILHAIZE," &c.

"They say—What say they? Let them say."
ABERDEEN.

John Galt.
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE SPAEWIFE.

CHAP. I.

THIS is the rehearsal of divers events and issues which came to pass in Scotland many years ago. At the time whereof it is intended to speak, King Robert, the second of that name, and the first of the Stuarts, was long gathered to his fathers; but he had left behind heirs and successors, as all monarchs and other great men naturally do, and from them, and out of their pretensions, arose the incidents and matter of this strange and very solemn tale.

It happened, in the lusty years of his juvenility, that the same King Robert had entertained an effectual dalliance with a fair and comely damsel, called Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Adam Mure of Rowallan, and by her he had a progeny of sons and daughters.

For causes and reasons, but whether of state or of inconstancy is not set forth, neither in the histories of the time nor in the chronicles of the kingdom, this Robert, during the life and reign of his uncle, King David the Second, estranged himself from the gentle Elizabeth Mure; by which great distaste on his part, she was stricken with sorrow, and languishing in the solitude of neglect, she drooped her head, and became pale and pining, and died with a heavy sigh.

He afterwards addressed his amorous suspirations to *Euphemia Ross*, the daughter of the

proud and warlike earl of that name, and was to her publicly married, with all the pomps and pageantries befitting the wedding of the heir to the Scottish crown. With this lady he lived several years, and begat, according to the custom of the age, sons and daughters, of whom Walter, Lord of Buchan, and Earl of Atholl, Caithness, and Strathearn, is ordained to act a principal part in this our olden and eventful history.

About the end of King David's reign, the Lady Euphemia Ross being dead, Robert repented of his infidelity towards that sweet and patient gentlewoman, Elizabeth Mure, and acknowledged before the king his uncle that she had been his wedded wife; and that he had procured from his holiness, Pope Clement the Sixth, a dispensation, by which his children by her were legitimated. And when on the death of the king he ascended the throne, the first exercise of his regal authority and princely influence was to procure, by a strong handling of the interests and loyalty of the States of the kingdom, in Parliament assembled, an act of declaration, whereby the children of his first love, Elizabeth Mure, were admitted as his rightful heirs, and of an elder order than those of the Lady Euphemia Ross.

Thus was the venom of dissension from the beginning instilled as it were into the blood of the princes of the royal house of Stuart, and thus did their progenitor, while intending justice and atonement, work out against his own offspring a machination of prerogative brought with the seeds of irremediable enmity. Is it therefore to be wondered, that the righteous Heavens, with an unparalleled constancy of displeasure, have continued, through so long a succession of bloody and funereal events, to manifest their judgment on the doomed and guilty race?

But not to expatiate on those old and early

crimes, let it suffice to say, that, although during the remainder of King Robert's days, he partook of some calm and consolation in the reflection of having atoned, as far as he then could, to the fair and mild Elizabeth Mure, for the blight he had cast on her fame and honour in the bloom of her youth and beauty, he had not long departed this life in the ancient castle of Dundonald, when the seed of that fatal policy began to germinate and sprout into effect.

John, the Lord of Kyle and Earl of Carrick, the first-born son of Elizabeth Mure, was, according to the before-mentioned settlement of the order of succession, acknowledged as the heir of the kingdom. But at that era strange and dismal presages having become rife amongst the people, and it appearing that they were too deeply impressed and far-spread for the government to treat as fantastical, he was advised to allow himself to be proclaimed king by the style and title of Robert the Third, in the hope of thereby dispersing those gloomy bodements,—the name of Robert, from the renown and glories of the Bruce's time, and from the peaceful prosperity of his father's reign, being deemed singularly auspicious. The devices of statesmen, however, could prove of no avail against the decrees of Fate. Sentence had been pronounced on High against the race and generations of the Stuarts, and the revolutions of time have but served to bring to pass the necessary consequences of their direful and irremediable doom.

This third Robert being of an indolent inclination, and infirm of health as of mind, left his brother, the Duke of Albany, in the exercise of the royal power, to which he had been appointed in the latter days of their father,—and this duke, a restless and ambitious man, striving by all expedients and contrivances of policy to make a way for *himself* to the kingly possession of the

throne, so turned the youthful incontinencies of his nephew, the heir to the crown, to the furtherance of the purpose he had in view, that he caused him to perish of hunger in the palace of Falkland—an occurrence which so moved the grieved and dismayed father, that he sent his next and only son, Prince James, out of Scotland to be educated at the French Court, in order that he might be safe from the crafty policy of this ruthless uncle and his other treacherous kinsmen; but in the voyage to France, the young prince was taken by the English and carried a prisoner to London, where he was detained many years.

Meantime Walter, Earl of Atholl, the eldest son which the Lady Euphemia Ross bore to the second Robert, and who, but for the act of settlement by which the pretensions of his mother's offspring were set aside, and preference given to those of Elizabeth Mure, would have succeeded to the crown, remained moody and discontented with his fortunes.

But though the Duke so yearned to be all king, and though the Earl of Atholl repined at the unjust exclusion which, as he conceived, he was suffering from his right, still there was no immediate prospect that either the one would be gratified in his wishes, or the other indemnified for his privations by any change in the order of succession. For the States of Scotland having assembled in parliament at Perth, on the death of Robert the Third, the right of Prince James was universally acknowledged, and he was accordingly proclaimed king; so that, between Atholl and the throne, the preference given to the sons of Elizabeth Mure was thus again recognised and established by law.

CHAP. II.

WHEN the Estates of the realm had proclaimed Prince James King of Scotland, the Lords, Barons, and Clergy, then assembled at Perth, rose to return to their respective castles and dwellings; and the Earl of Atholl, and the Duke of Albany, who was appointed Regent, together with divers other noblemen of high renown and ancient pedigree, came riding in gallant array, with their intermingled trains, towards that ancient seat of abrogated royalty the Pictish town of Abernethy, where they divided themselves according to the different airts which it behoved them to take.

The Regent proceeded with his officers and retinue eastward to his princely residence at Falkland, and the Earl of Atholl courteously bidding him farewell, turned his horse's head towards Glenphaerg, being minded to pass through the same to Kinross, and thence to Dunfermling, where at the time his lady was then abiding; but, on reaching the entrance of the glen, he found the road had been so damaged by the torrents of the bygone winter, that it was almost impassable. He had, however, set his heart on going that way, and he would not return; so, ordering his men to dismount, he dismounted himself, and giving the bridle to a groom, walked on alone, while the youth led forward the charger before him.

It was then the green and pleasant month of May, when the leaves are bright and the waters

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—but I was saying, that had I a soul to be saved I would na wish to be ta'en into a brighter heaven than I saw in my dream."

"But how came I, Anniple, into your dream?" said Atholl somewhat seriously, "I never saw you before."

"I have seen you though," cried Anniple. "The tower on the hill-head canna be hidden, though a wee bush will scog the poor man's bield."

"And what may your dream have been about, to bring you so far in quest of me?"

"Ye'll have to gi'e me something before I tell you," replied Anniple importantly, tossing back her long matted locks with her right and left hand, and erecting herself into a posture which showed how highly she considered the value of her apocalypse.

Lord Atholl smiled, and taking a purse from his belt, presented her with a piece of silver.

"Another," said she, holding out her hand with the money lying in it.

The Earl drew out another piece, and laid it in her palm.

"Three's aye canny, my Lord," said Anniple, "make it three, or"—

The tone and look with which she said this, still holding her hand stretched out, struck the Earl, and he stood for a moment with his forefinger in the mouth of his purse, evidently surprised, and in some degree daunted.

"A free heart maks a fair fortune," said Anniple; "and if ye get what I bode, ye'll no grudge me gold."

The Earl dipped his hand into his purse, but having no more silver, he drew it out empty.

Anniple started at the motion, and retiring aside, said, with an offended air—

"Pass on, my Lord Atholl, and let your train

pass on. It's an ill omen that ye canna make good your purpose."

"I have been fooled," said the Earl to himself; and he called to his groom, Kelso by name, to bring his horse forward; but Anniple laid her right hand on his left arm, and showing him the two pieces of silver, looked sharply in his face as she said—

"Is that a fit largess to one who comes to tell you?"—

"What?" exclaimed the Earl eagerly; but in the same moment he flung off the hand with which she held him by the arm.

"Lord Atholl, 'twelve maun dee or I be the laird!' was the sang that Sir Lourie Græme of Dronask sung, when but a page in the hall o' Monteith; and yet, or thirty years were come and gane, he was the laird himsel. How many stand atween you and the crown, Lord Atholl?"

The Earl looked sternly, but made no answer.

"I can tell though ye canna," exclaimed Anniple triumphantly; and she began to count on her fingers the different sons and descendants in the male line of Robert the Second, beginning—

"There's Jamie the Prince, and Robin the Regent, and Murdoch his son, and his sons three—six already,—that's no right, I saw but five."

"'Tis strange!" said the Earl to himself; but his colour fled as he looked at her, where she stood muttering and counting her fingers.

"There were but five," said she,—“but five burials in my dream, before the sparkling crown was placed upon your head. Oh! pale and wan I thought ye were, and the crown sat so heavy, that drops o' blood fell trickling down your cheeks.”

"Kelso, bring forward the horse," cried the Earl sharply, and the groom obeying, he instantly mounted and galloped forward; Anniple, scrambling up the side of the hill, ran wildly to—

wards another obstructed turn of the road, where she knew he must check his speed. There, standing on a ledge of the rock, as he passed under, she clamoured a loud and shrill raving of malaisons till he had the road again free before him, when, as soon as he slackened his rein and plied his rowels, she set up a frantic shout, and hallooed and screamed in an ecstasy after him.

CHAP. III.

WHEN Duke Robert of Albany had been upwards of twelve years sole regent of Scotland, he died at Stirling, and his son Murdoch having succeeded to his lands and honours, was also appointed to succeed him in the government of the kingdom ; no heed being taken of the rightful king, who was all that long time languishing in captivity among his natural foemen the English.

The Regent Murdoch was a man much unlike his restless, proud, and ambitious father, who had so long sat the saddle of the state with a slack bridle and a sharp spur, for he was of a remiss and easy nature ; and though it could not well be said that he was a doer of ill deeds, yet might it be averred justly, that he permitted them to be done, for by his indolence crimes were allowed to grow to customs.

Those weak qualities, however, which amounted to vices in his public faculties, were, in the minor duties of his household, such endearing virtues, that his lady loved him with a matchless constancy of affection ; and his sons, while they were merry playing boys, could never find a happier sharer of their pranks. So that the castle of Falkland, while the kingdom was rent with feuds and raids, and all the woes that flow from a feeble sceptre in a weak hand, was for many a day the blithest dwelling, high or low, that could be found in any land.

But when the young Lords grew to manhood,

they became rude and riotous, little heeding their indulgent father's admonitions, and giving themselves up to those bold vices which made poor Scotland so long weep tears of blood.

Thus was the felicity, which reigned in the castle of Falkland, put to flight, and the weak and easy Murdoch could only complain to his sympathizing Duchess, of their obstreperous and licentious sons.

But Isabella, Duchess of Albany, the daughter of the Earl of Lennox, was a lady of an august mind, and endowed with an equanimity not easily shaken from its steadfastness. Though a most true and devoted wife, she was not blind to the faults in the public character of her lord, and she urged him to resign the regency, that some firmer hand might curb the disturbers of the kingdom, and restrain the rash and headlong spirit which was taking possession of all the noble youth of the time. Murdoch, however, was averse to this, both from the effort that the act would require, and the dangers which he knew it might bring upon the rights of his family. For, in the event of his resignation, he saw that the Earl of Atholl would naturally be appointed his successor; and, considering the manner in which that nobleman, and the other royal children by the same mother, had been set aside in the order of succession, he could not doubt that, were he in authority, he would leave no means untried to bastardize the progeny of Elizabeth Mure, at least if King James should happen to die in England. Thus it was, that from selfish purposes, and altogether forgetful of the claims of the people, did this other Stuart put to hazard his own renown, the honour of the state, and the fortunes of his family.

But the turbulence of his sons waxed every day more intolerable, and they set his public and

paternal authority alike at nought, in so much that one morning, when he was preparing to take the pastime of hawking on the Lomond-hills, and while Arrow, his favourite falcon, was on his arm, the young Lord Walter requested that he would give it to him; and the Lord James coming up at the moment, also begged to have the bird, and they quarrelled concerning to whom it should be given, which so chafed their father that he indignantly ordered them to retire, and learn to reverence him better. Whereupon Walter snatched Arrow from his hand, and twisted its neck.

The Regent was not more astonished than grieved at this impious insolence of his son. He looked severely at the two rash youths for a moment without speaking, and the tear rushed into his eyes.

"This," said he, "truly exceeds endurance. Unhappy boys! since you so far forget what is due to your father, I will bring back him that we all must obey."

He then left them in the hall, where they continued for some time reviling each other, and went and forthwith gave orders for the immediate assembling of the States in parliament, in order to move them to consent that the necessary means for the ransom of the King might be taken; in which duty he laboured with such unwonted earnestness, that in due season the thing was brought to pass; and James, after marrying the Princess Joanna, cousin to the King of England, when hostages were given for the payment of his ransom, was brought home to appease and console his afflicted kingdom.

In the meantime these proceedings on the part of Duke Murdoch had caused great parlance and many controversies of discourse, both in hall and bower, especially in the castle of Atholl, where every thing that bore a tendency to esta-

blish the descendants of Elizabeth Mure in the possession of the throne, was considered among the retainers as a wrong done to the rights of the Earl their master. And it happened one evening, that the young Lord Robert Stuart, the Earl's nephew, and presumptive heir, being present with Regulus Menzie, the chaplain, and certain friars, who had come from Dunkeld to partake of the good cheer of the castle, they began to discourse of these things, when Father Regulus spoke of the marvellous salutation which his Lord had met with in Glenphaerg from Anniple of Dunblane.

"Though the woman," said Father Regulus, "be seemingly imperfect in her wits, yet hath she acquired great renown for her singular discernment of coming events."

The chaplain, after pausing a short time, as if to recollect something which he could not at once recall to mind, added—

"I am grieved with an exceeding sorrow to observe, that of late my Lord grows slacker in his piety, and credits not those oraculous monitors with the faith he was wont."

"I should not be surprised," replied young Stuart, "that the contempt which the Earl entertains for freats and pretensions to fore-knowledge, has arisen from hearing that a creature so ill-assorted in her wits as the Dunblane Spae-wife, should be thought entitled to so much homage as it is said she receives for her predictions from the commonalty."

"Be counselled by me," rejoined the churchman, "and let not your noble uncle shake your religious faith. The wonderful Heavens often achieve their greatest purposes by the most simple means. Though the oracles of wisdom do not always appear to the incapable judgment of men commensurate to the revelations which they declare, yet are they not the less worthy of our

reverential belief. I have myself known manifold instances of the most marvellous verification of those unheeded truths, which, from time to time, the mysterious Heavens, in their dark workings, cause to be published, the wherefore no man can tell, nor why it is that the organs which declare them are, by the abject condition of their human faculties, seemingly so unmeet.

"Once, in my younger years, I happened to be in the hall of Dirlton, when the Lord was trying on a new surcoat. The tailor, with his prentice, were standing by, and the prentice was a famished and ghostly-looking creature, with big blue eyne, more like the dull mindless blobs of a dead man's head than the windows of a living spirit. He had a mouth that was as a penance in a charnel-house to behold, and there was an altogetherness of horror and simplicity about the lad very strange and dismal to see.

"Dirlton being very vogie of his brave garb, shewed it to his lady, pressing the doublet into fitting as he gambolled in his jocularly with her, when suddenly the prentice, who was so standing by with the shears in his hand, having no respect to the Earl's degree, cried, 'For God sake! put off that coat, as ye wish to live. O! lady, as ye love my lord, let it never be on him!'

"'What for would ye not have me to wear this gallant coat?' replied Dirlton, marvelling at the wild creature's panic; 'I never had a braver on my shoulders.' But the poor ashy-faced boy slunk away behind his master, for the mystical spirit had left him.

"The lady was however frightened, and going towards the lad, craved to know wherefore he had made such an unearthly outcry; and, after a time, the trembling thing declared that he saw a bloody dirk sticking in the skirt of the surcoat. On hearing which, the Lady Dirlton

controlled her Lord to put it from him, and he gave it to Sir David de Hepburne; and the very next night, when Sir David was going from the castle to North Berwick, in the glimpse of the setting moon, some secret enemy of the Earl stabbed him in the side; aye, just where the tailor's prentice thought he saw the bloody rent o' the visionary dagger. Now, this I was an eye-witness to, Lord Robert, myself, and surely there was nothing about the wit and judgment o' that vapoury and fantastical creature, to make a man have any faith in his foreknowledge."

The young Lord listened, with the look of one more afraid than believing, at this recital; which Father Regulus noticing, added—

"Nay, my Lord, I can tell you something still more wonderful and not less true. I knew a man, by name Alisner Ballingall, a skipper, who, being driven with his vessel, by stress of weather, into a port in the Macdonalds' Isle, when he was coming round to Dundee wi' a cargo of Cordovan leather and sack-sherries from Hispania, lay wind-bound there many a weary day, in so much that his thoughts began to languish for his home and hearth."

"Well," said Stuart, who was hearkening as one who hears a tale told of some helpless man in great jeopardy, "what happened?"

"One day," replied Father Regulus, "as he was standing on the shore very disconsolate, looking wistful over the stormy sea, an old Highland carle, that could speak but little of our Christian tongue, came to him with bare feet, and a plaid gathered round him—'What will ye give me,' said that wild seer to Ballingall, 'and I'll tell you what ye're wishing to see?' Whereupon the melancholious skipper proffered him a bodle, and the old man then laid his hand upon his, and presently he saw the inside of his *own house* on the shore of Dundee, and his wife

lying in her bed, and his gudemoother weeping, with a new-born bairn on her knee, and he saw that his wife was dead !”

“That was indeed wonderful,” said Stuart.

“Yes, and no less so than true ; for when he came home, more than a month after, he was told, to his deep affliction, that on the same day, about the same hour that he had seen the vision, his loving wife had died in giving him a son.

“Let none, my Lord, tell you, therefore, how these things may not be ; for that such preternatural shows are made to the eyes of men and women, and in forms seemingly most palpable, is to me out of all doubt, and that effects follow answerable thereto is as little questionable.

“When I was in my novitiate at Cambuskenneth, we had a servitor of a solitary humour, who, during the harvest time, warded in the barn, and nightly slept there. One morning he told the Abbot that he could not any longer abide in his service, for that he had several times seen a dead corpse in its winding-sheet straightened beside him as he lay alone in the barn. By which tale the Abbot was so moved, and on account of the great trepidation of the man, that he forthwith discharged him. On the following year, however, when the man’s dismay had passed off, he, being delivered from his fears, came back to us and was again hired for the harvest ; but one day he fell from a stack of corn that he was helping to build, and being sorely hurt, he was taken to the barn and laid on the spot where he had formerly slept, and there soon after he expired ; the vision he had seen being thereby clearly proven to have been a warning to himself.”

“That we may have some inward intimation of the time of our own end,” said Stuart, “is not to be questioned, but sights and knowledges

of things concerning others, and for no plain cause, is matter that may well be contested."

"Say not so, my Lord; I redde ye give not yourself up to such perilous incredulity," exclaimed Father Regulus. "Have you not heard the story of Sir William de Lyone's page, when his master was embarking at Dundee with the Earl of Wigton for the service of the French king, Charles VI.? An old demented woman, that made her living by seeking her bread, and was not regarded as in her right mind, came to Sir William and said, 'Waes me, Sir Knight, hae ye nae better cleeding for that winsome bairn than a winding-sheet?' which made Sir William to laugh, for the page was very gaily apparelled. But scarcely had the bark put to sea when the page fell sick, and the very day she cast anchor on the French land he was laid in his grave.

"I could give many more proofs as incontes-
tible as all these, but I think what is said is
enough to prove that there are mysteries in and
about us, which are not the more to be question-
ed because they cannot be expounded; and I
marvel and admire, that wise men, and men of
lore and gifts should be so shy to believe that
there are any visions of the kind whereof I have
spoken. For what is more certain, than that
good and bad angels have communed with the
inhabitants of the earth? Was it not evil spirits
that presented visions and audible voices to the
four hundred and fifty false prophets of Ahab,
and the four hundred prophets of the groves?
And surely it is as easy to work upon one sense
as upon another—upon the sight as upon the
hearing; and we know from the story of Saul
and the Witch of Endor, that necromancers and
magicians themselves have not only seen shapes
and forms, but likewise have allowed others to
see the same of beings superior and beyond their
art.

“I do remember that, many years ago, there was an aged woman in Auchtertool, who was accustomed to give very oraculous responses, and who averred, that she had been dead, her soul translated, and allowed to return from the other world. I questioned her myself, as to what she had witnessed there, and she told me that she had seen her daughter, who had died about a year before. That woman was, as I learnt from her own children, liable at times to fall into a syncope ; and when questioned, as she lay in that state, concerning things yet in the depths of the future, she was instructed what response to make, on recovering, by pictures seen in her trance, of the things that were to be, even as they would visibly come to pass.”

Father Regulus would peradventure have continued to speak farther of these marvels of nature, and of the incommunicable intelligence which some persons are enabled to hold with the world of spirits, but Stuart interrupted his descant by saying—

“Then you do think that this same Spaewife, whereof we were discoursing, may possess the power of discerning what is coming to pass, though, as the Earl says, she lacks in the concord of the ordinary senses?”

“It were impious to doubt it,” replied the Father, “in the face of so many accomplished predictions. But”——

What he would have added is unknown, for the young Lord became very thoughtful, and soon after retired from the recess of the hall where this discourse had taken place ; and when he was gone, Father Regulus replenished the flagon for the solace of his pious visitors from Dunkeld.

CHAP. IV.

NEXT morning, by break of day, Stuart was mounted, and was, with but a single groom, on the road to Dunblane, to consult Anniple the Ta'en-away concerning his future fortunes. On reaching the town, which he did early the day following, conceiving himself unknown there, he inquired freely for her dwelling at a band of children whom he saw playing in the street; and they conducted him to the back of the Abbey churchyard wall, where they pointed to a hovel constructed of sticks laid loosely against it, and rudely covered with turf and straw,—a grousum den for a human creature.

"There," said a boy, "ye'll see her sitting like a clocking hen, wi' a wee de'il in the shape o' a green-e'et cat on the one side, and a muckle black ane like a kankry colley-dog on the ither."

The children then run off as if they had been terrified; and Stuart dismounting, gave his horse to his groom, and walked alone to the hovel, from which, as he approached, a colley-dog, to all appearance in voice and gesture, came ragingly forth, and seemed, for a time and season, resolved to debar him from advancing nearer towards his mistress; who hearing the barking, and having a sentiment therefrom that a stranger was coming, looked out, and commanded the dog to be still; which it not only forthwith was, but ran back towards her in a very cowed and remarkable manner.

Stuart, seeing the way thus cleared, went boldly forward and beheld Anniple sitting under her inclement shed, with her limbs deep buried among straw, and a ragged blanket drawn shiveringly over her head and round her unclad body. As he came forward, she began to laugh in an eldritch manner, and to chatter with her teeth; a joy whereof to witness the outward demonstration was to endure a sight that may not be pictured.

"Hey, Robin Stuart," she exclaimed, "ye hae come far afield the day to get your fortune spae't. For ony gude that I can tell you, ye might just as weel hae bidet wi' the auld de'il's bargain in the towers of Atholl. He'll rue the day he didna pay me for the braw dream I dreamt for him."

Stuart stood aghast to find that she knew him so well, and was almost afraid to look at the malicious satisfaction with which she enjoyed the anticipation of some ill fortune that was hatching for his uncle. The solemnity of his dread was so enhanced, by the way in which she seemed to recollect the incident that had so provoked her spleen, notwithstanding the long period which had elapsed. He wished, at the moment, that he had never come near her, and was on the point of returning to his horse, when she looked up to him with a peculiar glance of her eye, that fixed him to the spot.

"Ye'll no gang away, Robin Stuart; it's no me that ye need to fear,—there's a winsome dame in a bonny bower that 'ill maybe wise you to mair wae;" and then she began to sing—

"Gae scour the silver basin,
And scour it bright and fine,
For it maun kep the gentle blood,
That's red red like the wine."

The very spirit of Stuart was frozen by her dismal cadence. At the conclusion she again

looked up at him with the corner of her eye and laughed, crouching her shoulders faintly, and rubbing her hands as she said—

“But birl your bodles, Robin Stuart, or ye’ll get nae spaeing frae me.”

Stuart, scarcely aware of what he did, took his purse from his belt and flung it into her lap. She snatched it with a childish shriek of glee, and pouring the contents into her hand, flourished the empty purse round her head as it were in triumph. She then counted the money, and finding an odd piece, she paused, and said to herself, “That’s no canny.”

Then she restored the money into the purse, and gave it to the dog, and he immediately carried it into the far corner of the hovel and lay down.

After a short pause, during which she looked steadily at Stuart, the tear shot into her eye, and she began to weep and sob, saying to herself, with her hands clasped,—

“He’s a braw lad, o’ a leil nature. Tyke, bring back the siller.”

The dog instantly returned and laid down the purse on her lap.

“Hae, Robin Stuart,” said she, “take back your bodles,—I’ll spae no fortune to you;” and holding up the purse, she sang with a wild and careless freedom—

“And Lazarus dee’t, and Dives fell sick,
O, a sick sick man was he,
And he said to Death,—‘O, winsome Death,
‘A’ my goud and my gear I will gi’e,
‘Gin ye’ll but taste yon physic cup,
‘Sweet Death, and let me be.’”

Dives wanted Death to take the physic, that he might grow better, but Death took him away to the ill place, Robin Stuart. It’s well for me I

have nae soul to be flesh for the de'il's brimstane broth."

Stuart shuddered.

"Take back your purse," said Anniple again.

"Nay, it is yours. I have given it, and it must abide with you," replied Stuart.

"Then, Tyke, take it been the house again."

The dog obeyed, and his mistress began to churme in a musical manner to herself, and to toss the straws which covered her lap, first with the fore-finger of the left hand, and syne with the similar finger of her right, taking no farther heed of the young prince, who stood wondering and fearful beside her.

After the lapse of several minutes, she looked up and said, "Are ye aye there yet, Robin Stuart?" and then, seemingly wholly occupied with her own fancies, she turned from side to side, pulling here and there a straw, and twirling it, as she sung :

"O waes me ! O waes me ! O waes me, Mary !

I had a joe, and he loved me weel,

And he danced at Castle Cary, —

But his rosy cheek, rosy cheek, rosy cheek, Mary,

And the blithe blue eyne that won my heart

Lie buried at Castle Cary."

"Were I to guess by your reluctance, and these snatches of old ditties," said Stuart, "what you could tell is, that I am to be short-lived. Now, as I hope never to account life a thing that a true man should set any store by, say if I shall prosper as a lover?"

Anniple smiled and replied,— "There's nae doubt about that;" and she added significantly, "if the lady's kind:" in a moment after she subjoined with solemnity, "Your fortune hangs upon a maiden's honesty."

"But how? in what way?" cried Stuart eagerly. Anniple, however, instead of making him

any answer, took up the corner of the blanket which hung about her shoulders, and began to imitate the gestures of one busily sewing.

"Ye see," said she, "that I'm very thrang; my kirtle needs clouting; dinna fash me ony mair wi' your speerings."

"Why have you told me so much, since you refuse to tell me more?" exclaimed Stuart impatiently.

"O weel, weel," replied Anniple peevishly, "come when that poor silly shavling gabbit body Duke Murdoch has got his reward, and then maybe I'll hae mair time for clavers."

"When Duke Murdoch has got his reward! What do you mean?"

Instead, however, of making any reply, she called her dog, and began to caress him, saying, "My kind messin,—my brave messin, that barks awa the ill-deedy brats that pelt me wi' stanes;" and she turned up the corner of her eye towards Stuart, and laughing immoderately, said, "I redde ye, Robin Stuart, hae mense—hae mense, for Tyke can bite."

"The creature's insane, a mere born-fool," said Stuart angrily to himself, and was moving away;—but before he had left the hovel ten or twelve paces, she started out, and drawing the blanket-mantle close around her with one hand, she ran after him, and seized him by the skirt of the surcoat with the other, addressing him with a soft and earnest solicitude,—

"There's a cross and cloud in thy lot, Robin Stuart,
There's a light in a bower to beguile, Robin Stuart;
There's deaths ane and three,—and a ship on the sea;
But the flower in the ha' I would fain wise awa',
For the dule it will bring upon thee, Robin Stuart."

The slow and tender pathos with which she delivered this mystical jargon, moved him to

regard her with a compassionate contrition, and he said, with much gentleness in his voice,

“Poor thing; it is ill to redd thy ravelled fancies; but I will order thee to be better heeded hereafter.”

“It’s kindly thought and softly said,” replied Anniple; “but who should care for me? When the fairies made me up o’ a benweed, and laid me among the tow for the weaver’s wife’s bonny lassie bairn, I was a thing made to suffer aversion. Therefore it is that all Christian creatures hate me;—that folks flee frae the sight o’ me;—that wives draw in their weans and shut their doors when I gang by;—that I maun eat beans frae the shawp, and corn frae the stalk;—that the wicked rain pursues me, and the cruel hail pelts me;—that the cold wind bites me, and the fire-flaughts flash me. There was a wee white lambie playing beside its mother, on a bonny green knowe. It was an innocent thing, and I thought it looked kindly at me, which never man nor womankind had done; but when I gaed to warm it in my arms, it too was frightened, and ran bleating away. All living creatures see and ken, that I’m a thing the holy Heavens had no hand in the making o’. I wish that the weaver’s wife’s wean were dead in the fairy land, that I might lie on the loan what I am, a weed to be trampled on.”

Stuart was melted to sadness by the wailing simplicity of this complaint of her abject estate; for though he could never think that a creature with so much sweet blood in her bosom, was a thing so fantastical as she reported herself to be, he was yet so filled with awe and strange wonderment by her prophetic breathings, that he could not but own she had qualities above the common faculties of the human world, and was indeed a being conceived in some mysterious

eclipse of nature. He stood in consequence doubtful and irresolute what to say or do ; but she relieved him speedily from his perplexity, by darting away, and huddling herself down beneath the litter in her hovel.

CHAP. V.

DURING the regencies of the two Dukes of Albany, particularly in the time of Murdoch, the domains belonging to the crown had been squandered among the upholders of their unrighteous administration, in so much that King James, not less resenting this traitorous prodigality than his brother's cruel death, and the long neglect he had suffered in being left a captive with the English, did, among the first acts of his royal freedom, procure from the States in parliament a law to inquire what lands belonged to the crown in the time of King David the Second, and to call on those who possessed them to show their charters.

The knights and barons who were of the faction of the house of Albany, being alarmed at the vigour with which the King showed himself determined to carry this law into effect, consulted together, and, by dint of fears for himself, and the representations of his partizans, Murdoch was persuaded to form a league with a strong host of those who were participators in the spoliation of the crown, to oppose the execution of the law. This confederacy being divulged to the King, his Majesty was so offended thereat, that, disregarding the turbulent temper of those irascible and daring chiefs, he ordered many of them to be arrested, and summoned a parliament to meet forthwith at Perth, *with a view to higher purposes.*

This bold enterprise for a Scottish King to undertake, in that age of anarchy, was promulgated on the morning of the same day on which Stuart went to consult the Spaewife; so that, after he had parted from her in the manner rehearsed, and had remounted and returned to the highway, he was surprised to meet horsemen coming in great haste from Scone, where the Court then was, and the whole country become as it were alive with wonder and conjecture at the sound and sight of such unwonted energy in the government.

Stuart, a brave and gallant youth, knew too well, both from the chronicle and tale, that such speed in the emissaries of the King betokened no prosperity to some of the princely nobles; and fearing, on account of the jealousy with which all the descendants of Euphemia Ross were regarded by those of Elizabeth Mure, that the storm might light on the house of Atholl, to which he was the presumptive heir, instead of returning to Atholl-castle, he clapped spurs to his horse, and went to Perth, where he soon learned what the King had done, and that his royal indignation was kindled against the faction of the house of Albany. It entered, however, neither into his imagination, nor into that of any other, that aught was then meditated against Duke Murdoch himself, the King's uncle, nor against the three princes his sons, and therefore was he none displeased to hear the news, since the object of the King's wrath seemed to be only to check the arrogance of a faction, by which the power of the house of Atholl could not fail to be necessarily strengthened; and being likewise informed that his uncle, the Earl of Atholl, was expected at Scone, he resolved to await his coming.

The Earl of Atholl was a subtle and long forecasting man, shrewd, sententious, and well

skilled in the pliancies of worldly wisdom; moreover, he had the gift of an enticing and urbane demeanour, which, from the first interview, had won upon his nephew the King, who, both for affection therefrom, and his deep insight of men and business, trusted him with an entire confidence.

When the Earl arrived at Perth, he carried Stuart with him to Scone, and for the first time introduced him to his royal kinsman, who, seeing him in the morn of manhood, and of a bold and princely carriage, was instanter moved to treat him with much courtesy. From that day he became his Majesty's favourite companion in all hardy pastimes and the adventures of hawking and hunting, but he was not taken into his councils; for King James, though still but a young man himself, conferred in his royal office only with ancient and grave men, sage from experience, and of an austere and reserved wisdom,—not that he questioned the discretion of his kinsman, albeit there were those who accused Stuart of dissimulation and hollowness of heart. But if the King had indeed any discernment of these defects, he assuredly considered them rather as faults of nature, which no man can amend, than sins of carriage, which by virtue may be overcome.

In the meantime Duke Murdoch, with Isabella his Duchess, and two of their sons, Alexander and James, were abiding in the stately towers of Falkland, little dreading or dreaming of the cloud that was gathering over them,—which, from their alliances among the nobles of their faction, haply they might consider as a thing which could never be. The two young lords were indeed reckless of destiny, and pursued their own headstrong courses, as if the *King was still a prisoner among his enemies, and*

their indulgent father still the irresponsible Regent of the realm.

But it came to pass, that on the day when the King had in such sudden haste summoned the Earl of Atholl to Scone, some hint of what was meditated against the confederated nobles arrived at Falkland, which so exasperated those two fierce princes, that they vowed vengeance against the King if he resolved to persist in his English methods of government; for so, like all of their faction, they called his Majesty's bold and impartial justice,—the which to hear caused alarm to their mother, and she strove in vain, with all her kind counselling, to appease their rebellious menaces.

"The King," said she, "is a just man, and though in weeding this poor realm, which has almost run to waste, he may in his great task pull corn away with the tares, still his endeavour deserves the praise of all good men, and it would well become you, my dear sons, who are the nearest Princes of his blood, to honour and assist his noble undertaking."

"Would you," exclaimed the Lord James, "have us, who are so near to him in blood, truckle to him like base hinds?"

"No," replied the Duchess, "but I cannot deny to myself, that I fear ye have done many things which it may not stand easy with so righteous a ruler to pardon, and, therefore, I crave you to give him at least no new nor greater cause of offence."

"You feel not, mother," said the Lord Alexander, "in this as the Duchess of Albany should—see ye not that his vengeance is directed all against our friends?"

These harsh words smote the Duchess to the heart, and tears rushed into her eyes as she said *with much fervour*—

"Headstrong and irreverent boys, get ye hence, and learn the homage that is due to your

Prince and to your parent. What but your father's power, and that rank which makes you so bold in your wild courses, has protected you from the avenging law? Do you forget that the Duke is no longer Regent?"

While she was thus reproaching them for their unfilial behaviour, Duke Murdoch himself came hastily into the room with letters in his hand; his face was pale and his limbs trembled, and a flush, betokening as much of sorrow as of alarm, was on his cheek.

"Now," he cried, "ye intemperate spirits, now shall ye prove the difference between a king and a father."

"What has befallen us?" said the Duchess, moderating the agitation with which, but a minute before, she had been so shaken.

"Their brother Walter," replied the Duke with a sigh, "has been this morning arrested, and sent a prisoner to the Bass."

The two young princes looked at each other, —their mother for some time was unable to speak, but at last, giving a deep sigh, she laid her hand upon her Lord's, and said—

"Alas, Murdoch! these are not tidings which should make us renew the quarrels of our hearth. —O hasten with what speed you can to the King; make all submission. Go, my dear sons, go with your father, and by your humility disarm the force of the blast that so threatens to break us down."

"What," exclaimed the Lord James, "would you have us drop like fascinated larks into the adder's mouth?"

The afflicted Duchess, at hearing this, and seeing her two sons conferring together with fierce and resolute countenances, began to wring her hands and to pace the floor, and weep very bitterly, crying—

"O! my prophetic heart has long foreseen all

this," and turning to the Duke, who was standing very disconsolately ruminating with the letters in his hand, she said with a pathetic but reproachful voice—"O thou rash Jephthah, by thy vow to recall the King, behold our dear Walter must be sacrificed—O the terrible justice of this King; it will make me a childless mother!"

The old afflicted father looked at her, and shook his grey head, as he said—

"Alas! Isabella, how often did you urge me to get the King recalled, and how much did you rejoice when the States ratified the treaty for his ransom, the very act that deprived me of the power to protect our children!"

"My joy," replied the Duchess, still grievously weeping, "was without reason! Oh! it has proved but an omen of woe. It was a light like that false morning which dawns in the north, and is never followed by any day, but only with storms and calamities."

"Come with me," said Duke Murdoch, turning in sorrow from the Duchess, "let us go to Scone, and do what we can to appease the displeasure of the King."

"Were you Regent of Scotland," cried Lord James, "and will you cringe and be spurned?"

Lord Alexander was however touched by the extreme misery of his mother, and said he would accompany his father; which so exasperated the choler of his brother, that he cried hoarsely with rage.

"Do as you will, spaniel, but my resolution is taken;" and with that he quitted the room, and mounting his horse, immediately left the castle. Scarcely was he gone, when there arose a great cry and panic in the court, which for a moment caused a pause in the lamentations of the Duchess.

"What has happened?" cried the Duke from a window; but before he received any answer,

the warder of the castle and several officers rushed into the room. The Duchess saw that some dreadful thing had come to pass ; and gathering all her strength, she dried her tears, and calmly inquired the cause of their alarm.

"A herald," replied the warder, "has come from Scone, and is now at the gate demanding admittance and the surrender—"

His tongue faltered, and he could not add more.

"What does he demand?" cried the Lord Alexander.

"His Grace, yourself, and the Lord James, as prisoners accused of high treason."

"Then let the wall be instantly manned," cried the young Lord, with the bravery of youth, "it is a new thing for a Scottish noble to be seized like a thief."

"No," said the Duchess majestically, "it shall not be so ; ye shall submit yourself to the King's mercy, for ye need it. Sir warder, admit the herald."

"Yes," said Murdoch, with a dignity that he seldom seemed to possess ; and turning to the herald, who at that moment was ushered in, he added, "Keith, we will not resist the royal authority—we submit ourselves to you."

But the Lord Alexander still waxed more wroth and indignant, and rushing towards the herald, would have wrested the baton from his grip. The Duchess, however, again interposed, and bade her Lord and son farewell, with a serenity that was more sorrowful than tears or lamentations.

The two princes, father and son, were then taken away prisoners. The Duke was carried to Carlaverock castle, and the Lord Alexander to Stirling, where on the same day, the Earl of Lennox, father to the Duchess, was likewise brought in a prisoner, accused of the same treason.

CHAP. VI.

AT the time when the displeasure of the King went forth against the house of Albany and all its adherents, Sir Robert Græme, who had partaken largely of the lands whereof the crown had been despoiled, was likewise arrested, and sent to Stirling castle.

This Græme was a man of a stout heart, proud in temper, fearless in battle, and of an arm most puissant, both with sword and lance. Moreover, he was of a dour countenance, and a rude and robust frame; in lith and limb for strength a giant: but withal frank; and though in his nature ruthless as steel, yet was he not without a bravery, which won the largess of much laud from the courageous commonalty, who, liking the bold port of valiant men, take little note of their private defects.

But yet, notwithstanding his soldierly virtues, and a spirit which danger could not dismay, Sir Robert Græme was the thrall of an ungovernable revenge, and whosoever did him any wrong, or caused him to think he had suffered, his wrath burnt against them with a fierceness so unquenchable, that it could only be slockened with the blood of their life. Still in him revenge did not work with its accustomed cunning, but wore, in sooth, so much of the gallantry of *heroism* in the openness of its menace, that his *adversary* had never reason to say that he was not

fairly dared, as became the knighthood of the challenger.

The main occasion which led the King to incarcerate this bold man, with so many others of renown and weight in the state, for not fewer, it is chronicled, than twenty gentlemen of great ancestry and power were at the same time committed to durance, was his rebellious disregard to the Sheriff's claim to view the charters, by which he held the lands that he had obtained during the misrule of Duke Murdoch's regency, and which had formerly appertained to the crown. Seeing, however, the resolution with which King James was determined to enforce his authority, Græme dissembled the ire that was kindled in his spirit, and acquiesced, in conjunction with some of the other prisoners, so far as to consent to show his charters, and to trust to his Majesty's grace, that for this submission, the grants would not be revoked. By this policy he was set at liberty; but though permitted to enjoy his lands, he could not abide the thought of being so in the King's power, neither could he forgive his imprisonment, though but the penalty of his denial to do what the law required. Accordingly he bent all his thoughts, with the wonted sternness of his character, to achieve some great indemnification from the King.

Meanwhile the Lord James Stuart, who had so opportunely escaped from the castle of Falkland, when his father and brother were arrested, had passed with the utmost speed of horse to Balloch castle, in Lennox, the strong hold of his maternal grandfather, where he found Finlay, Bishop of Argyle, with many of the Earl of Lennox's friends and retainers, assembled to defend the castle against the King's power, which, from the imprisonment of their chief and master, they expected would be sent to the possession.

Bishop Finlay had been raised by the patronage of Duke Murdoch to the dignity which he then held, but less for his lore and piety than for other qualities, which were thought in that age to be of an account as good in the management of the Highland schores. Being, therefore, so much beholden to the house of Albany, and on terms of strict amity with the Earl of Lennox, he gave the Lord James a better welcome than good cheer. Not that there was ever any lack in that particular, where a bishop had obtained a howff; and to speak the verity of Bishop Finlay, he was without question a blithe and hearty priest, of a jocose countenance, somewhat carbuncled with the rubies of a jovial temperament. Well read he was in the virtues of all sorts of wines, and he could tell by his rosarie, whether Rumney or Malmesyne was best in cold weather; that Hippocras was excellent in a frosty night; and that Vernage from Vernon, in Touraine, was a sovereign remedy against the east wind; that Algrade was a Spanish liquor of good substance and flavour; how Bastarde was brewed from dry raisins and water, and not being the legitimate offspring of the grape, was therefore so called; that Ruspice and Pyment were also of doubtful parentage, and that honey added to spice made the difference of a cousinship between them. Often did he expatiate on the cordiality of Muscadell; and Grenada pleasant to ladies' lips; and how Claret and Rochelle, when of prime vintages, were medicaments well known to the physicians about the court, and not ill to take by churchmen, who, like himself, were martyrs to abstinence. Whether Bishop Finlay was as well skilled in the miracles of the Saints, the Lord James Stuart was not at any time of a curiosity to search *uncivilly*.

Being then a fugitive, and in some measure

daunted by what he had heard in his journey, concerning the strong grip that the King had taken of his royal sceptre against the friends of his father, the young Lord approached the castle of Balloch with a dolorous aspect, which even the heartiness of the welcome did not soon brighten.

The Bishop seeing him so dejected and moody, instead of conducting him at once into the hall, carried him by the turret-stair into an upper chamber, where, when they were within and the door bolted, he said—

“Be not overly cast down, my young Lord, the friends and vassals of Lennox, your valiant grandfather, need but the word to spring; and I have this day with me some of the bravest gentlemen in the shire: it cannot be that they will brook to see so many nobles of honourable pedigree called to show by what charters they have made new conquests. What’s this English-bred King that he should trouble us in our possessions? Touch my land, take my life. No, no, my Lord, it must not be endured, that King James shall be allowed to play these pranks with our Scottish rights. God’s wounds! if he be free to question the charters of the nobility, and to bring the estates of honest men into skaith and jeopardy, the Church itself is not safe.”

This stout speech heartened the Lord James, and he began to confer with the Bishop about sending forth emissaries without delay, to warn the vassals of the Earl of Lennox to be in readiness to take the field.

“It will fire the blood of every true Scot,” exclaimed the bold churchman, “to hear of such provocation. Your father, the first Prince of the blood-royal—your two brothers—the nearest kin of the King himself, to be all proclaimed traitors! There is not a free sword in Scotland

that will not rattle in the scabbard at the sough of such tidings. King James is fey, and will soon meet his fate. He only proves by these rash doings, that he can but ill carry a full cup. From a prison to a palace, what can he know of ruling? And of ruling too the bold barons of Scotland. But our nobles are not used to be so snooled. They may thole for a little, but sooner or later their old hardihood will break out. It is not possible that he will dare—”

The Bishop checked himself, leaving the sentence unfinished, struck, perhaps, with the improbability of the dreadful idea which had so inadvertently risen; but the Lord James caught the thought, and said anxiously—

“Why, if he dare imprison for such causes, and we see what he has done, he will not scruple to do more.”

“There is then the more reason,” cried the Bishop, “that we should not be slack. This very night let your summonses be sent to the vassals and friends of the family. Come, let us at once consult with those who are below in the hall. It will do your heart good to hear how they condemn the parchment government of this English-bred King. Courage, my Lord!”

So saying, Bishop Finlay, with the valour of a veteran, clapped the Lord James with a friendly familiarity on the back; for he had been tutor to him and his two brothers when chaplain in the castle of Falkland.

CHAP. VII.

THE hall, where the guests and retainers, together with the Bishop's servants, were assembled, was like a darksome cave; the ponderous beams and rafters, all carved with marvellous imagery, were sustained on the knotted heads of huge trunks of oak trees; a gaunt and cavernous fire-place was on the left-hand side, a roaring fire of roots and faggots and piles of peat, sent a red and fierce light on the faces of sundry old bare-legged carles, who were standing before it warming themselves, holding up their huge hands to screen their faces, which they averted from the heat, grinning in a savage guise, because of the reek that, from time to time, was blown into their faces by puffs of wind that entered from an air-hole at the back of the fire.

At the upper end of the hall there was a platform which rose some three or four steps above the floor; a door opened on the right and left hand of the same, and far in a recess, between the two doors, was a spacious window, whereon was emblazoned, with many cunning devices, all manner of heraldry and honourable augmentations of arms, very wonderful to see. At the lower end, over the door, was a brave gallery, in the front of which hung shields and swords; and on pinnacles, that rose towards the ceiling, were placed coats of mail and helmets in royal array, well befitting the ancient hall of a warlike Earl. In this gallery, on high times and great

festivals, bards and musicants were wont to so-
lace the guests banquetting below.

One of the two doors, before spoken of, led to the towers and strength of the place, by many a winding bout of stair and labyrinth, through strong chambers and abysses, hollowed in the walls for secrecy and stratagem ; the other door opened into a fair and spacious room, and thence into the gallery, by which the Bishop was conducting the Lord James.

" Stop," said Bishop Finlay, as he passed from the gallery into the room between it and the hall. " Pause you here till I have announced your arrival at the board, and claimed for you the courtesies due to a son of Albany and of Lennox."

The Lord James at these words halted, and the Bishop going forward entered the hall, shutting the door behind him.

It was a new thing for the uncurbed spirit of that young printe to stand so in the reverence of a reception ; it was indeed only the amaze of the moment at the Bishop's request that made him pause : for no sooner was the door shut than his blood mounted, and he strode forward with a proud and indignant step, as if to vindicate the equivocation done to his royal birth and knightly bravery.

But as he laid his hand upon the door to pull it open, the sound of a rustle and murmur in the hall made him recoil, and he again halted. A deep silence then ensued, and presently the voice of one speaking aloud was heard : but the thickness of the oaken door, gnarled with knobs of iron, so deafened the sound, that he could neither discern whose voice it was, nor the theme of the speaker. For a moment he bent forward to listen ; but his pride soon checked him, and with a *haughty* heart he turned on his heel and walked out of the room, and went into the gallery, flinging the door scornfully behind him. He was

not, however, long permitted to remain alone stepping the gallery with stately strides ; for in the course of a few minutes he heard a rushing in the room next the hall, and, in the same moment, the door that led into the gallery was thrown open wide to the wall, and several armed men, with fierce looks, came struggling, as it were with one another, who should be the first to enter.

The Lord James, who was then at the farther end of the gallery, on beholding this boisterous endeavour for precedence, and not knowing whether it portended homage or harm, laid his hand on the hilt of his sword, and placed himself in a posture of defence. But, before the intruders could reach him, the Bishop also entered the gallery, and called to him with a cheerful shout to receive his friends. For so it was. On being informed that he was in the castle, and on what errand he had come, they all with one accord started from their seats, each more eager than the other, to proffer his life and vassals to assist the fugitive Prince in vindicating the wrongs done to his house by King James.

When they had on bended knee presented their swords to the Prince, in token of their resolution to follow his banner to the uttermost, Bishop Finlay expounded to them what the Lord James would have said.

After this ceremonial of homage and tender of lives and fortunes, the which was done with more sincerity than ever the like proffer was made either by provost and town-council of borough town, or by chapter of churchmen convened on purpose, they all went back to the hall ; and when the Lord James entered, preceded by the Bishop, and followed by the chieftains, there was, for joy, a skirling and screaming of bagpipes, dreadful to hear and wonderful to tell, as if the vehement pipers had each aneath his arm

some desperate beast of prey, in the pangs and anguish of being squeezed to death.

The Lord James being seated on the right hand of the Bishop, a merled horn with a silver brim was set before him, and a mapple cup, adorned with Brabant carving, was also set before the Bishop, and there was likewise placed between them a pewter guardvine of Cypress bawme, the fragrant scent whereof was, of itself, as Bishop Finlay said, a regale fit for a Cardinal. The chieftains sat at the same board on the platform with the Prince and the Bishop; and from time to time the Prince filled his merled horn with the Cypress bawme, and gave it to the chieftains, and their hearts were warmed in an unspeakable manner towards him.

And because of the great honour which was vouchsafed to all present, by the appearance of a prince of the blood royal at Balloch, the Bishop bade the Earl's chaplain, Friar Eric of Toppermoray, to cause three of the twelve butts of old ale that were in the cellar, and which he called the Twelve Apostles, to be broached, and furnished to those who were sitting at the table in the body of the hall; whereby there was soon such a foaming overflow of their spirits, that the obstreperous din of the bagpipes was only heard skirling at intervals amidst the cataract of noises and exultation. The mirth continued to wax still more and more eager, in so much, that at last the vassals rose in pairs, and began to show the Prince how they would fight his battles.

First they passed one another briskly, looking sternly, each measuring the strength of his adversary. Then two and two faced, and both at the same moment began to spurn the ground in a most animated manner, which showed that *their rage was kindling*. Then the pipes uttered *a wilder yell*, at which the menacing combatants

turned fiercely round, and snapping their fingers, and clapping their hands, and shouting in the most terrible manner, they ran, they rushed, they leapt, they flew, their plaids streaming behind, their eyes flashing fire ; again they faced each other, again they thudded with their feet, brandishing their arms, venting frightful cries, stamping with rage, springing from the floor, swirling like whirlwinds, till the whole hall resounded as it were with thunder, every one at the table standing up and applauding.

. CHAP VIII.

IT was soon found, by the Lord James and the Bishop, that, save the immediate vassals of the Earl, who were full of ire at the thought of their old Lord and master being sent to prison, the Lennoxmen were very backward, especially the Glenfruids; in so much, that the Lord James, who counted much on their aid, was obligated to send Bishop Finlay himself to urge their chief to join him. This the right reverend Prelate would have declined; for, according to the perfectest report, Glenfruin kept not a house for a hungry guest; and as he said, it was not to be thought that any churchman could cross the hills in a cold spring morning without earning an appetite. However, the Lord James so pressed the mission upon him, that he agreed to set out on the journey.

A sedate shelly was accordingly provided to carry Bishop Finlay over the hills, and the skin of an otter, or selgh, was laid on its back, as an emblem and substitute for a saddle; two thongs cut from the hide of a cow were as stirrups, for in those days tanned leather was not among the Celts: and for a bridle there was another thong; and the bit, which was put into the mouth of the Bishop's shelly, was the key of the Provost of Dumbarton's door, which the chief of the Macfarlanes had, a short time before, taken away *with him*, when in the town on a herrying visitation, but which had been rescued by some

of the Earl of Lennox's men, with all the other spoil, as the Macfarlanes were returning home to Arrochar.

Bishop Finlay had a pair of boots made of hairy goat-skin, which he drew on before he mounted the shelty, and being a churchman, and having as such no equestrian predilections, for he did not indeed approve of the curvetting of horses, because such gesticulations, he said, were very perilous to riders. So he ordered four of those that were to be his guard across the mountains, to hold the shelty very steadfast while he got upon its back; the which, after some endeavouring, and the auxiliary of a leaping-stone, he at last achieved.

When he was in his seat, his feet in the stirrups, his prelatic gown properly accommodated, and the four-and-twenty clansmen appointed to guard him all in readiness and arrayed, twelve on the right and twelve on the left of the shelty, two of them, one on each side, took hold of it by the bridle, and led it forth to the castle-gate, the Bishop sitting most composedly, and without any visible symptom of molestation or dread. And when they were forth the castle, and across the ferry, they made towards the hills; and for the great veneration and reverence that the Highlanders bore to Bishop Finlay, they, by turns, two and two, led the shelty, by which the embassy was enabled to proceed at the rate of almost a mile an hour.

The sides of the hills were then rough with furze and heather; the waters of winter were still raging in the burns; the mosses were in divers places deep and flooded; and though in summer the journey to a deer-footed Highlander was not more than three hours time, yet to Bishop Finlay on horseback, with a train of four-and-twenty men, it was a full equinoctial day's travel; for not only did many impediments ob-

ligate him to choose a winding way, but ecclesiastical decorum required that he should proceed gravely.

This embassy was certes a very solemn apparition on the hills. First, there was the Bishop aloft, with his pastoral crook headed with a ram's-horn made of beaten silver in his left hand, holding the bridle in his right, and two Celts leading the sheltie. Then the mien and garb of his train were very marvellous to behold; for their hempen locks were spiky, and bristled with an untomsured fury, which, with their pursed eyes and grinning visages, made them more hideous to look upon than satyrs; and had they been met by any wayfaring Christian on those lonely hills and silent solitudes, it might have been imagined that they were of the legions of the host of Diabolus carrying away Bishop Finlay.

In the sunny calm of the afternoon, they had reached the crown of the ridgy hills that rise between the Clyde and Lochlomond, and where the Bishop bade his train stop the sheltie and help him to alight, that he might partake of some repast from their wallet of stores, was the brow of a mountain which, for the far and fair prospects that spread around, may well be called the Eye of Lennox. Truly it is a resting-place where the languor of weary limbs may be forgotten; for there the traveller needs no other solace than the delight which the eye, that is, the hand of the spirit, gathers from all sides of that wide and majestical expanse.

Bishop Finlay, as he took his seat on the thymy cushion of a little knowle, while one of his train was setting forth the provisions on a fragment of rock behind him, looked eastward, and beheld beneath him many a swelling hill and brown moor, and here and there, but few and far between, corn lands in the freshest ver-

dure of spring, nigh to which some turret, brightened by the sunshine, shone out from its cloud of fir-trees, and solitarily breathed a slender wreath of silvery smoke into the crystalline and silent air. Before him rose the green hills of Renfrewshire, with their hazel-fringed burns and sparkling water-falls ; beyond them, ranging far into the south, his eye for some time tried to discern the form of many a glittering thing scattered on the hills and in the misty hollows that lay, alternately shadowed and gay, between the nearer scene and the mountains that overlook the Solway, and the distant sea and the peaks of Arran, till, wearied in the vain endeavour, it rested on the unmolested waters of the Clyde, around which the shores were hanging headlong within, like the brim and inside of some Indian bowl curiously enamelled. A lone ferry-boat, slowly plying her heavy oars, was all the commerce moving then on that calm solitude.

When the Bishop had been some time seated in this still contemplation, being informed that the repast was set out, he rose and went to partake of the same ; but he was so ravished by the scene which he then beheld, that he stood for some time in a state of wonderment unspeakable. Below lay Lochlomond, with all its marvels of cliffy islets and woody shores. Far eastward spread the rich vales of Buchanan, and, like a champion in the van of some mighty host, before him, with his helmet of clouds on, stood Benlomond, the dark mantle of his shadow covering a wide space of the broad blue lake.

“ Verily,” said Bishop Finlay to himself, as he turned round and gazed again on all he had seen, “ if we thrive in the endeavour to push King James from the throne, it would be a *worthy achievement for the Church*, if I could get a *grant of all the lands* seen from this hill-top to

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build an abbey. It would make a saint of me, if not a cardinal."

After his refreshment, the shelty was again brought, and Bishop Finlay, being elevated on the top of the rock, was lifted therefrom into the saddle, if saddle it might be called, which was but the skin of ane sea-otter.

All things being again ordered, the embassade began to descend the slope of the hill, slanting northerly into and across a valley towards the castle of the Glenfruins, which was soon seen standing by itself on the brow of a jutting hill, that was rocky and shaggy, and difficult to climb.

This castle was one tall square battlemented structure, with a lum or chimney at the one end, and two little turrets perched on the corners at the other; and round about it was a wall of goodly masonry, strong and high, and pierced in many places with holes for the valiant men of the clan to shoot therefrom their arrows; and in this wall there was a gate, with a bulwark at each side, very fair to look upon, and over the same was a loophole window for espial before opening the gate to let strangers in.

As Bishop Finlay and his train drew near, some half-a-score of the Glenfruins came to the outside of the gate. Very wild and dreadful they were, and they had round their loins and cast over their shoulders a plaid, not of skin, but really of weaver's work, though in likeness it was much similar to the goat-skins whereof the Bishop's boots were made; and when they saw it was a bishop, and above all Bishop Finlay, who had great reverence in those parts, they threw themselves on the ground before his shelty; and as he was lifted from its back, they kissed the hem of his garment, and he bestowed *his benediction* upon them.

Then Bishop Finlay was led thorough the gate

into the court of the castle, wherein he saw five cows chewing their cud in a corner behind a dunghill, whereon divers swine grovelled at their pleasure, and hens and cocks were ram-paging—a store for hospitality such as well befitted the castle-yard of such a Highland chieftain; and when he had looked around and saw that there was indeed a competent store of victual in those living creatures for his train, he was right glad of heart; for all the way thither he had thought of what was said concerning the spare feasts of Glenfruin, and was thereby much troubled in mind.

From the fore-court Bishop Finlay was conducted round the end of the turretted keep of the castle, and brought to a low and narrow door in a wall, that was built from the corner of the keep to the outer wall; and having stooped his head, he entered in, and found himself in another court, and before him a stair which stood out from the keep, but led to a door high in the wall thereof. When he had been conducted up the steps of this stair, an old door, which had been the half of a gate, that had suffered in some raid, for it was charred or burnt, was laid from the stair-head to the door in the keep, and he having passed over the same, with some fear, stepped into the hall of Glenfruin.

At the upper end of this hall, in a vault or pen, a mighty fire was blazing and roaring, and before the same,—a pleasant sight, as Bishop Finlay thought,—there was the carcass of a sheep, still adorned with the head and horns, roasting on a spit made of a young tree. Four or five veterans were sitting on a form in the dark side of the chimney, and one of them was instructing a stripling, who was kneeling on the *hearth*, screening his face with his shield

from the scorching fire, where the roast needed basting.

This stripling was the young laird, and his instructor was the chief himself,—a strong, hale, gruff, and rough carle, with a bald head and a toosie grey beard. He was attired in plaiding of divers colours, which his lady and her daughters and handmaidens had carded, spun, and woven; and round him he wore a spacious toga of the like exhibiture, the corner being buckled on his left shoulder with ane broach as broad as the palm of a man's hand, knobbed and gnarled with an array of glass beads and other similar precious gems. He had moreover a sword on his thigh, on the hilt whereof were many rich carvings and cunning devices of o'ersea work; the which sword was, among the clan, accounted worth twenty head of the best cattle ever lifted by them or their fathers from the lands of Buchanan.

The stir and din caused by the entrance of the Bishop drew the eyes of the chief, and of those who were with him around the hall-fire, towards the door; and Glenfruin, seeing who was his visitor, advanced towards him, and greeted him in an hospitable manner,—the which was the more to be remarked, as in those days the chieftains were prouder than the bishops, and many of them could not brook the privileges which the churchmen claimed among their clans. Bishop Finlay, however, as is already rehearsed, was much beloved among the Highlanders, for he meddled not with their controversies, nor put any interdict on their raids into the Lowlands: indeed, considering how much gear was thereby brought into the Highlands, it would not have been a wise thing of him to have *marred the helping* of his own trencher, by *counseling compassion* towards the Amalekites, as he

was wont in the castle halls to call the faint-hearted Lowlanders.

After due interchange of salutations, the Chief led the way for the Bishop to the foot of a moveable timber stair, so made that it might be drawn up in sudden alarms, or during quarrellings in the hall, and ascended the same, followed by his guest and the young chieftain.

When they were about half-way up the steps, the old warrior happened to look down, and seeing who was coming after the Prelate, he said to his son, giving him a crunt on the head with his staff, "Swolls and podies, Nigel! bide down, and look to the cuisinage, and no let te sheep's podie, ye teevil, be prunt to an ashie."

CHAP. IX.

THE part of the castle into which Glenfruin led the way for the Prelate, was that which is called in the Saracenic tongue the harem. In the chamber, up into which they ascended, the lady and her two daughters, with the help of an aged crone that filled the manifold offices of nurse and midwife to the family, mistress of the yarn, weaver of the tartan, and chemist of the pot-dyes, were thriftily teasing and garbling wool.

In one corner stood a bed, and under it, with two large handles curiously fashioned and adorned, plainly of great antiquity, probably one of the chattels which the daughter of Godfridus MacArkyll brought with her when she married the ancestor of Glenfruin, was to be seen an ark or coffer with large brazen bands and massy clasps, and a lock of cunning workmanship. In this coffer all the treasures and precious things were deposited, which the chiefs of the Glenfruins had gathered and hoarded in the course of many generations' raids and reivings.

At the foot of the bed hung a bundle of many heers, hasps, and spindles of worsted yarn, of divers hues, a trophy and testimony of the household thrift of the Lady Glenfruin; and on a shelf hard by the same lay a cheese, with two neighbourly wooden gardevines, and a drinking horn with a brim of graven silver. Beneath this shelf was a costly oaken elbow-chair, gnarled with *flowery chisel-work*, such as could not be sur-

passed for device and intricacy in any Lowland castle of that age. How it came into the castle of Glenfruin, whether brought among the spoils of some bold adventure, or purchased at the price of sheep and cattle lifted from the lands of Buchanan, were a vain thing now to determine. There however it was, the grandest of all the moveables whereof the clan Glenfruin then stood possessed, and near it was a table with six legs, each shapen into a conformity with the foot of a dog; there was likewise in that lady's chamber two beaufet stools, and on pegs along the wall hung the mantles and garments of the lady and her two fair daughters, and swords that the chiefs of the race had taken from their foes in battle. Over the chimney the family-tree of pedigrees, with all its branches, hung depicted on ancient vellum;—the lower part was so blackened and shrivelled by time and the touch of the kith and kin of the family, that no man could tell from what obliterated root the Glenfruins had sprung.

On entering the room, the Chief said aloud: "The Peeshop of Lismore, mi ladie, has come on a congregation with his penedictions for te goote of all our sowlls." And going to the carved elbow-chair before spoken of, he drew it to some distance from the wall, and turning to the Prelate, added, "Pe pleased, my Lord Peeshop, to make a sederunt."

Bishop Finlay, so invited, sat down.

Glenfruin then seated himself on one of the stools, and the lady, who had with her daughters risen from the floor, sat down on the other, while the young ladies found seats on the bedside: old Nora, after kissing the hem of the Right Reverend Father's garment, gathered the wool into her lap, and retired with it into an adjacent room.

To bless or to pray was seldom any part of Bishop Finlay's business, and of course he was

not at all times prepared to answer a call for either. But on this occasion, seeing that the pious Chief of the Glenfruits regarded his visit as a pastoral advent, he resolved to look the difficulties of the emergency bravely in the face; accordingly, after a brief space of time spent in silence and rumination, he rose, and, while Glenfruit with his lady and daughters knelt on the floor, lifted up his eyes and hands, and seemed to supplicate in the Latin tongue.

When he had made an end of praying, his pious auditors went and kissed his hand as he again seated himself in the elbow-chair,—after which Glenfruit went to the door and cried down the stair,—

“Nigel! Nigel!—are ye a toor nail, Nigel?” Nigel answered, and the Chief then continued,—

“Till te mooton pouke pe ready—ye’ll pid te proth come up, for my Lord Peeshop has gotten a naething py his veeseetations this plissit mornings.”

This order was speedily obeyed, with all the alacrity characteristic of Highland hospitality. The young Chief himself, to do the more homage to their holy guest, brought up the wooden bicker of soup, which he gave to his father, who held it till the ladies had set out the table with the six feet. Then an officer high in the household brought five shells of clokie doos, or burn-foot-mussels, for in those days there were no spoons among the Celts; and Glenfruit and the ladies, together with Bishop Finlay and the young Chief, began to dip their shells into the wooden dish, and to eat of the broth, which was a seething of venison and barley.

When they had partaken thereof, which, by reason of the heat in it, was not easy to be done, *Nigel* was despatched below to select a fitting portion of the roasted sheep, and the Bishop began to break the purpose and object of his visit.

"Well, Glenfruin," said he, "what is your notion of this new way of ruling the realm?—No doubt, you have heard that Duke Murdoch and his sons have fallen under the King's displeasure,—and your old friend and good neighbour Lennox, he too is taken up and sent likewise to prison."

"Goote neepor, my Lord Peeshop," replied Glenfruin, "he was a neepor, tat's a to-be-surely,—put call ye't a goote neepor, to make his men reive us o' our owne honest liftings?—Goote neepor!—oomph.—My Lord Peeshop, what's a goote neepor?—te teevil!—oomph."

"That certainly," said Bishop Finlay, "was not so kind in him as it might have been; but perhaps at that time there was some paction between him and Buchanan, by which he had undertaken to protect his cattle against the raids of your clan as well as of the Macgregors."

"Te Macgregors, my Lord Peeshop.—Sowlls and podies!—te Macgregors!—I'll tell you, my Lord Peeshop, if Macgregor was to speech a word to me, I would put my foot ——— Sowlls and podies, te Macgregors!—oomph."

"Nay," replied Bishop Finlay, "nobody would think of *evening* the Glenfruins to the like of the Macgregors; maybe, however, were you to play your policy a little adroitly, who knows but the Lord James might give them a shove with the left shoulder, for the love and kindness he bears towards you."

"Love and kindness,—oomph!" said the chief, "but wha do you cal te Lord Hemies?"

"Duke Murdoch's son," replied the Bishop: "he's now at Balloch Castle."

"Oo aye—to Lord Hemies!" exclaimed the Chieftain, "and he's pe come to Pawloch; and for what pe he come, my Lord Peeshop, to Pawloch?"

"The Earl his grandfather, the Duke his fa-

ther, and the Lords Walter and Alexander his brothers, with many of the stoutest of their friends, are all imprisoned on a charge of high treason."

"Aye, aye, my Lord Peeshop,—and is it a to-be-surely tat te King's Majesty, Gote tirect him, will make a sample of his judification upon tem. He'll make a praa profit py te forfeiture, an' he do tat, my Lord Peeshop."

The Bishop was somewhat startled by the complacency with which Glenfruin spoke—but he said—

"No doubt he looks to what he will gain; but is it not, however, very alarming to think that noblemen of such high blood, pedigree, and privilege, should be laid hold of by laws made for varlets, and obliged to show by what other charters than their swords they hold possession of their lands? How would you like to have your right so questioned?"

"Sowlls and podies! my Lord Peeshop, are ye a sincerity? Ye make te hair on my head like te teeth of a heckle. Sowlls and podies! my Lord Peeshop—is't a possible tat ye think I have na a righteousness?—Sowlls and podies! —oomph."

"Quite the contrary," replied Bishop Finlay; "I know not a baron in the land that is more truly the lord of his own lordship than you are chief and master of your own estate and vassals; but I would ask you, if it is to be endured, that men of family are to be questioned how they came by their lands? A stop, Glenfruin, ought to be put to the attempt at once, and that too by a show in the field: there is no other way of making King James sensible that English laws and practices will never do in Scotland. Our forefathers might as well have submitted to King *Edward* as to be brought under English *thraldom* in this way."

"Al tat, my Lord Peeshop," said Glenfruin, "al tat is a verification ; put if te King's Majesty, Gote pliss him, have had a potential poot Tuke Murdoch an' heirs of his pody into a custody, and to make a similitude with Lennox and others of his side—oomph."

"But the Lord James is still free, and will revenge the injury done to his family."

"Te Lord Hemies, my Lord Peeshop—te Lord Hemies,—poor laadie !—oomph."

"It is surely not possible that you will submit to see such things done? What is their case, Glenfruin, to-day, may be yours to-morrow."

"Put, my Lord Peeshop, if te King's Majesty, Gote prosperity him, make repellious traitors of his preesoners, and take teir lands for a forfeiture, maype he'll no make an object to let te like o' me, tat will ne'er be a molest to his laas, to come in for a skirt o' te lands o' Lennox ; for, my Lord Peeshop, some of te lands o' Lennox would be great commodity, and a plenty o' pleasure to all te Glenfruins."

By this time the board had been replenished, and Bishop Finlay, discerning that the Chief saw it might not be profitable to join in the rebellion, turned the discourse to pleasantries in the Celtic tongue with the ladies, who were so highly accomplished in that erudite language, that they never thought of conversing in any other.

CHAP. X.

WHILE Bishop Finlay was on his embassy, the Countess of Ross passed by the castle of Balloch, with a goodly troop of fair damsels and a redoubtable guard of gallant squires, to see her kinswoman, the beautiful Sibilla Macdonald, daughter to the Lord of the Isles, embarked at Dumbarton in a galley for the Isle of Skye. They knew not that the Lord James Stuart was then in the castle, else they would not have come by that road; for he was betrothed to the Lady Sibilla, and the ruin which had fallen on all his family was the cause that made the Countess send her home. It happened, however, shortly after the Bishop had departed from Balloch castle, that the Lord James, with a numerous train, had gone forth to take the pastime of hunting; and while he was on the hills, he discovered the gay retinue of the ladies moving down the banks of the river; and curious to know who they were, and for what occasion so many gentles in glittering attire should be travelling at such a time in that direction, he rode hastily towards them.

But when he came near enough to discern that the gallants were gentlemen of the Earl of Ross's train, and saw the stately Countess herself on her quiet grey palfrey, with her hood thrown back, that she might be fanned by the cool freshness of the gale, and beheld by her side, on an ambling jennet, a slender and delicate lady, all veiled like a Cistercian nun, he was

shaken with a strange anxiety; for in the graceful movements of that gentle lady, albeit the dejection with which she drooped her head was unlike the sprightly air of her wonted carriage, he discerned the bride to whom, but for the sudden visitation of the King's displeasure, he was soon to have been married; and the thought came to him, as it were with the flash and scorching of lightning, that all hope of their union was destroyed, and that she was then departing back to the house of her father, never to return for him.

He reined his horse on the brow of the hill that overlooked the road, and then alighted and held it by the bridle. His heart beat thickly. Hitherto the spirit of indignation and revenge had animated him with fierce resolutions, and the sense of the adversity which had overtaken himself, and the thought of the ruin which hung over his father, and his father's friends, had borne him above the grief of his condition; but the sight of the approaching cavalcade made him feel that his situation was one too in which sorrow had a heavy part.

His first motion was to advance and make himself known; but without being almost conscious of the reason why he did so, he had suddenly leapt from the saddle, and he remained irresolute, with the bridle in his hand, till he was observed by one of the gentlemen of the Lady Ross's retinue. By that time several of his own train had seen the party approaching, and they came towards him, that they might be ready to assist or to obey.

The attention of the Countess was directed towards the spot where the Lord James stood, and she halted her palfrey, and raising her right hand to skreen her eyes from the sun, looked up the hill for the space of two or three minutes *without speaking.*

She then called one of her servants, to send him forward to inquire who the stranger was that seemed disposed to interrupt her progress ; for so she interpreted the attitude and intention of the Lord James, from the numbers and haste of his followers assembling from all parts of the hill. But her train had quickly discovered that it was the outlawed Prince ; and the man whom she had summoned to send forward, knowing the effect that the news would have on the Lady Sibilla, informed the Countess in a whisper, that it was her betrothed bridegroom.

For a moment the Lady Ross wist not what to do ; but, after a short reflection, she ordered the servant to ride up to the Lord James, and tell him to come to her ; at the same moment, bidding the Lady Sibilla remain where she was, she touched her grey palfrey, and ambled forward to a distance, attended only by two gentlemen, whom she ordered to remain apart as the Lord James joined her.

"What do you intend by this?" said the Countess ; "surely you can never think of involving a lady, whom you have professed to love, in the present ruin and jeopardy of your fortunes ? I entreat you, James Stuart, not to exasperate, by any new outrage, the King's justice, which is already sufficiently roused against the house of Albany, but allow us to pass unmolested ;—Sibilla's griefs are more than she can well bear.—Do, for the mercy of Heaven and the sake of the blessed Virgin, retire, and let us pursue our journey in peace."

"Chance alone," replied the Lord James, "has thrown me in your way ; but what you say of Sibilla's sorrow is reason enough to make me stop you. It is for me, and on my account, that *she is grieved*, and I cannot, as a knight and *nobleman*, but desire to lighten her grief."

"*Truly, it is a kind way to do it,*" replied the

Countess. "You would console her, by adding to those offences which have brought on the proceedings that have withered her hopes. Be you assured, that the King is much more likely to pardon treason against himself, than the abduction of a lady of Sibilla's rank. But, my Lord, you shall not take her from me—my train is in bravery and numbers more than equal to yours." In so saying the Countess waved her hand, and in a moment all the gallants and servants of her retinue were around her like a whirlwind. The damsels, who were left behind, screamed and flocked towards Sibilla, where they alighted from their horses, and assisted her also to alight.

The train of the Lord James had followed him with anxious eyes; and seeing him thus suddenly in the power of strangers, they instinctively thought, that the readiest way of extricating him from the danger into which he had fallen was to make towards the defenceless ladies, conceiving that by so doing they would probably draw off the main part of the guard by whom he was surrounded, and thereby afford him a chance to escape.

"You have been rash, Lady," said the Lord James, when he found himself environed by her train on all sides; "I meant you no harm, and surely my concern for Sibilla, to whom I have caused, as you say, so much sorrow, ought not to have been thus promptly visited by an arrestment which may bring my head to the axe. You have, however, made me your prisoner, Lady, and I submit to you as such."

"If I did not know the cunning that is in you, James Stuart," exclaimed the Countess, "I would repent me of this; but, until Sibilla is safe, I will not trust to your protestations."

"Safe! my Lady: she is free, and I am your prisoner."

"I would it were indeed so," replied the Countess; "see, your men have her in their power!"

"But you may soon have her with you," said Stuart with a smile. "Shall I order the ladies to be brought hither?"

"I may not trust you," said the Countess eagerly. "I cannot be answerable to my brother, Macdonald, if I bring his daughter into the risk of being with you—situated as you now are."

"You cherish a harsh opinion of me," said the Lord James gravely. "This encounter is accidental; and having no warrant nor authority to arrest me, why do you deal so hardly by me? In truth, Lady, I throw myself upon the compassion and clemency of your sex. Consider in what situation Sibilla and I so lately stood. You say that the ruin which has fallen upon me has pierced her heart and blighted her happiness; I do assure you, by the honour of my knighthood, that she cannot suffer more for me than I do for her. This meeting has indeed made me know what it is to be unfortunate. Do with me, however, as you please—give me up to my enemies—carry me to them in Sibilla's company—it is meet that she who was to be my bride should see me taken to the scaffold, for to that consummation I doubt not my misfortunes will now come. But, Lady, you will not so far forego the gentleness of your own nature, as to do all that?—You will still commiserate the fate that has divided me from Sibilla, and permit us, before we are for ever separated, to bid each other farewell?"

"Will you order your train then to retire?" said the Countess with hesitation.

"*Undoubtedly,*" replied the Lord James *eagerly*; and he desired a gentleman of the guard

by whom he was surrounded to go for one of his men.

"When this storm, has blown over," said he, addressing himself again to the Countess, "surely Macdonald will allow the marriage to proceed."

"It is broken off for the present," replied the Countess coldly; "but what have you to say to Sibilla?"

The Lord James smiled as he said, "A lady, so renowned for beauty and lovers as the Countess of Ross has been, needs no answer to that question; but it cannot be that you intend we shall take farewell before so many spectators?"

"I will not permit her to be out of my sight, I know what you are, James Stuart, and the desperation of your fortunes is not likely to make you less adventurous than you were before."

While this was passing, the Ross-man, whom the Lord James had sent to his train, came back with one of them, and his master ordered him to bid his fellows bring the ladies forward.

"Not so! Not so!" exclaimed the Countess. "Your train shall not come nigh us!"

The man halted, and looked towards his master.

"You put ill thoughts into my head, Lady," said the Lord James; and turning to the servant, he added,—*"Then let the ladies come by themselves."*

"Send off your men," rejoined the Countess anxiously;—whereon he said aloud,—*"Tell them to retire;"* but, in giving this order, he glanced his eye to the hill and the river, which the Countess observing, clapped her hands as the man rode off, and exclaimed,—*"We are undone!"*

"You allow your terrors, Lady, to overcome *the wisdom and discretion* for which you are so *justly renowned*," said the Lord James coolly;

and raising his bridle he moved his horse close to her palfrey, which, as if by accident, he touched so sharply with his spur, that it bolted and almost threw her from the saddle. The confusion which this alarm occasioned, caused an opening in the circle of horses round the Prince, through which he suddenly darted into the rapid river, and soon gained the opposite bank. In the same moment, the man who had carried the message to his train having alighted, seized the Lady Sibilla by the waist, and threw her up before one of his companions, who instantly galloped off with her to the castle.

The outcries—the panic—the rushing into the river—the trampling—the flight—and the consternation which these headlong incidents at once produced, is not to be told ; but the Countess of Ross, before she could rein her palfrey, found herself alone—the prisoner flown—her niece carried off—and her train scattering themselves, at full speed, on both sides of the river, in pursuit of the fugitives.

CHAP. XI.

LEAVING for a time the Lord James Stuart and the Lady Sibilla Macdonald to the uncertainty of their fortunes, it is expedient to consider what, in the meantime, was doing elsewhere. As soon as the Earl of Atholl had arrived at Scone, the King held a session of the Council, at which it was determined to proceed against the prisoners without any respect to their propinquity. By whom this advice was urged, whether it was a suggestion of his Majesty's own wisdom, or insinuated by the Earl of Atholl, has not been divulged ; but, in consequence thereof, a high and solemn tribunal for the trial of Duke Murdoch, with his father-in-law and two sons, all then in custody, was ordered to be formed and held at Stirling, whereat the King in person should preside in his regal estate.

In coming forth from the Council-chamber after this austere resolution, his Majesty took hold of the Earl of Atholl by the arm, and they walked together in the verdant meadows that lie between the Abbey-palace of Scone and the swirling waters of the river Tay.

It was a pleasant afternoon ; and the green-vestured Spring sat smiling in her arbour of budding wands and interwoven boughs, with many a sweet blossom in her lap, and a young bird on her finger, which she was teaching to hop and sing.

While the King and his uncle, the Earl, were walking along sedately, discoursing of the cares

which then oppressed the royal mind, and weighing in the scales of discreet reason the considerations that had prevailed at the Council-board, touching the high crimes and misdemeanours of Duke Murdoch's family, his Majesty would often stop, and look around and sigh, as he inhaled the fragrant freshness of the free air, and beheld the far-seen mountain-coronal of Breadalbane, then glowing like the purple amethyst to the setting sun. For, in his youth, he was wont to sit in an ancient turret of the towers of his captivity, enjoying the gladdening sense of liberty, in the contemplation of the bright and broad freedom that lies in the boundless expanse of the view from Windsor-hill.

"What eye," said he to the Earl, "can look on this fair scene without delight? and what heart think of the misrule that makes it scarcely fit for the abode of man, without anger and sorrow?"

"Your Highness," replied Atholl, "has but to go on with your intents;—aggressions restrained, justice impartially awarded, and offences punished, will soon make it worthy of the beauty it has received from Heaven."

"And I will go on:—yes; by the help of God, though I should myself lead the life of a dog, I will make the key keep the castle, and the bush protect the cow. But it is a dreadful thing, that the first of my task should require such severity towards my own kin!"

"Is your Majesty then really resolved to bring the prisoners to trial?" said Atholl, with a look that betokened some latent purpose in the question; but the King not heeding his manner, for he esteemed his uncle beyond all his counsellors, replied frankly—

"Is it not so decided?—Can you doubt it?—*Give me leave to say, my Lord, that I was not altogether content with you to-day. Had the*

Duke done nothing else than stript the crown of the lands, which he has squandered on his partizans, he had done enough to deserve the heaviest punishment. Long must the kingdom rue the consequences of the poverty that he has entailed on your kings. He has not left us the means to reward the fidelity of a menial. How shall we ever be able to keep in check the arrogance of a nobility so accustomed to rapine? We have neither the means to make it their interest to serve us, nor wherewithal to enforce their allegiance. Yes, my Lord, I am resolved to go on, and I look to your able and experienced wisdom for encouragement and support."

"But surely," replied the Earl, "should they be found guilty, as I doubt not they must, it cannot be your Majesty's intention to bring them to punishment?"

"Why not?" exclaimed the King, surprised at the remark. "Do you think that, out of any consideration for the power of their friends, or of any foe, I shall be afraid to do my duty?"

"I but thought," said Atholl humbly, "that, as they are so near of a kin to your Majesty, their lives might be spared."

"They are not yet found guilty, at least according to law," replied the King; "but if they were, Justice knows not propinquity. The proceedings against them, however, shall be open and before all the world. No man shall accuse me, in this stern business, of being actuated by malice or any other base motive. Though the trial will, perhaps, bring disgrace on our blood, it shall yet be a proud thing for Scotland, and a glorious vindication of her long-abused justice."

"I cannot, however, but grieve for Duke Murdoch," said the Earl, with a sorrowful cadence.

"He is my cousin—"

"So is he mine," interrupted the King; "and I grieve that he is so, because he has proved him-

self so bad a man; and his vice wants the grace of bravery, for it seems almost questionable whether his weakness or wickedness is most in fault. The nation might have pardoned his misrule; but humanity can never forgive the licentiousness in which he has indulged his sons. As a kinsman, my Lord, I have more cause to grieve for them than you; for by their deaths I can gain nothing which may not be obtained by the forfeiture of their estates, but you will come so much nearer the throne."

The countenance of the Earl changed at the observation, and he looked troubled, and cast down his eyes, saying—

"Your Majesty cannot suppose that any consideration of that kind would, to me, lighten the thought of the sad destiny which inevitably awaits so many friends?"

He would have proceeded to say something still more calculated to win the King's charitable interpretation of the compassion which he had shown throughout for the misfortunes of the house of Albany, but just at that moment Anniple of Dunblane rushed from behind a holly-bush nigh to where they were then standing.

King James was not only startled by this sudden obtrusion, but filled with wonder at the wildness of her small bright piercing eyes; and his wonder grew to awe as she placed herself immediately before him, and leaning with both hands on a rude sapling, which served her for a staff, gazed steadily at him for some time, and then looked round to Atholl with an expression of pleasure, so ghastly, charnel, and yet triumphant, that the King shuddered, and hastily turned away from the contemplation of an object too hideous, mystical, and undaunted, to be seen in *that mood* without astonishment mingled with *horror*.

"*She is a poor harmless natural,*" said the

Earl, observing the revolting effect which she had produced on the King; "but the country folk regard her with superstitious reverence."

"I do not wonder at their dread," said his Majesty solemnly; "but come, my Lord, let us return to the palace."

"Stop," cried Anniple, and advancing up to the King, she laid her staff softly on his shoulder, as he moved away. Atholl, surprised at this bold familiarity, ran forward and pushed it off, and at the same moment the King, who was not less amazed, turned round.

"Stop! James Stuart," she resumed, dropping the end of her staff on the ground.

"What would you?" said the King, willing to indulge her infirmity, and struck with sore pity at the remnants of beggary which hung around, but hid not the anatomy of her shrunk and withered form.

"Ye wear the crown and the velvet gown," cried Anniple to his Majesty; "and I have but a blanket and a bodle; but for all the lands of Badenoch, Atholl, Breadalbane, Strathern, and Strathmore, I wouldna change my beild in Dunblane kirk-yard for your bonny Queen-lady's silken bower, to dree the penance that she maun dree."

"And wherefore would ye not?" said the King. However, she gave no heed to the question, but dropping her eyes, and speaking to herself, she murmured out—

"Often I have sat on the town braehead, and seen the reek o' the happy town-houses, and grat my een sair, that the ill-deedy fairies had made me to live and be without any kind mother; and often, in the blythe summer nights, when other weans were leaping wi' gladness at Through the Needle-ee, and would na let me play wi' them, I yearned to steal some holy Abbot's purse, to buy mysel' a wee singing sister or a brother. But

it's weel for me I may say now, that I never had, and never can know, the peril of kith and kin."

The Earl of Atholl's whole frame was shaken to so great a degree, as she uttered this disconsolate soliloquy, that, notwithstanding the fascination with which such extreme wretchedness had arrested the King's attention, he observed his emotion, and said—

"I wonder not she says so; for the whole country cannot but sorrow that I am forced to proceed so cruelly against so many that should have been my best friends."

The Earl was unable to answer, or was perhaps prevented, by his surprise at the freedom with which Anniple went close to the King, and raising his surcoat aside, touched him on many parts of the body with her finger—

"What is this for?" said the King, adding to the Earl, "let her alone my Lord, I am not afraid of any spells."

"Eight-and-twenty bloody wounds—I see them all, and the hands that bear the knives!—Let me look at your's, Lord Atholl," exclaimed Anniple, and suddenly grasping him firmly by the right wrist, she looked at his hand, and alternately at something about the King—

"Yours is not among them, my Lord," and she dropt the hand carelessly. At that moment two officers came hastily towards them, and Anniple darted away.

"Messengers," said one of the officers, "have arrived from Glasgow, with tidings of a rebellion in Lennox, headed by the Lord James Stuart and the Bishop of Argyll."

"What! already in such power!" exclaimed the King; "you see, my Lord Atholl, how much our worthy kinsmen show themselves deserving of mercy. This is the submission you *and others* undertook the Lord James would *send in*. But no matter—his quickness in ill

shall not outrun our justice. Let us return to the palace, and call the council together again. It is demanded of us at once to quench this treason, and to bring the other traitors to their audit, else the wild woman's prediction may be too soon fulfilled.

CHAP. XII.

BUT it was not from the Lord James Stuart, and Bishop Finlay only, that the King had cause to fear adversaries in arms against his determination to administer justice without respect of persons or of kin. Of all the adherents of the house of Albany, there was not one of so bold a spirit as the Sir Robert Græme before spoken of; and no sooner was it known that he had made his peace by submission, and had been delivered from durance, than he was expected to show himself in his true colours. And so it came to pass; for in the same hour in which he was released from custody, he began to plan devices and stratagems, to revenge the wrong which, in his own notion, he had sustained, and also, partly, to show his gratitude for the manifold favours which he had received at the hands both of the Regent Robert and of Duke Murdoch.

Though a man of singular obduracy in his lawless undertakings, and ruthless, bold, and bloody, beyond any other chieftain of his time, yet Sir Robert held the virtues of friendship in such esteem, that he used to say, "As it is the duty of all men to support the sufferer in a just cause, so, in like manner, is it the duty of friends to stand by one another, be the cause of quarrel right or wrong."

His first endeavours were directed to achieve the deliverance of the Lord Walter Stuart from the Bass, where, as it is already told, he had *been sent on his arrest for secure ward*; for the

Lord Walter being a knight of undaunted valour in enterprise, stout of heart, strong of limb, and dauntless in danger, it was thought no castle on the main land was redoubtable enough to contain so subtle and intrepid a spirit.

Græme was chiefly moved to think first of the Lord Walter, on account of his offence against the King having been of a more open and daring description than the treasons imputed to his father and brothers. Many holy churchmen had besides accused him of riotous extortions and sacrilegious pillage, and gentlemen of good ancestry charged him with irremediable outrages in their families; moreover, the pious Lady Abbess of the nunnery at North Berwick had, with her own pen, written to bishop Wardlaw of St. Andrews, that it was not to be told what the Lord Walter Stuart and his reprobate companions had perpetrated in her house.

But as the Bass stands far in the sea, and is difficult of access from a boat, save when the winds are propitious, Græme was for some time perplexed to know in what manner he could convey his mind and intents to the prisoner. At last he bethought him of an expedient very bold and perilous, but the more recommended to him by the bravery it demanded.

He hired at the South Queen's-ferry a boat and mariners, purposing, as he gave out, to pass thither to Crail, and thence to St. Andrews, in fulfilment of a vow which he had made in prison, as if it was a thing within the compass of chance, that Sir Robert Græme should have in sincerity ever any pilgrimage of piety to perform. And having embarked therein the mariners spread the sails:—a lively breeze was then blowing from the westward, and the boat rushed before the wind, as if it had been instinct, with eagerness to reach her port. But, as she approached Inch Keith, Græme began to feign afraid of the waves,

he that knew not what fear was, and to picture rising blasts and raging seas, such as no man in his right mind, as he said, ought that evening to encounter; by dint of which, and exhortations following thereon, he caused the mariners to take shelter under the lea of the island, in the hope that the wind would, in the course of the night, abate; for in vain did they assure him there was no danger, and represented that Kirkcaldy was a safer haven, since he was not content to continue his voyage.

Under the eastern cliff of Inch Keith they lay till the sun was set, and the lights on the shore and the stars in the lift were kindled. The moon, but four days old, was setting in the clouds over the Pentland-hills, and seemed as if she was trailing from the sea a long and rippled line of cold and watery light. For though Sir Robert Græme still would maintain that the waves were too rough for his small bark to encounter, the mariners saw that they were but twinkling in the moonshine like the wimpling of a running river.

When the moon had sunk behind the hills, and the land lay black between the restless sea and the starry sky, Græme ordered the sails to be again spread; but when the mariners, as their course lay, steered in towards the coast of Fife, he rose in well-acted displeasure, and accused them not only of having lost their way, but of making for the Lothian coast.

They protested that they could not be mistaken, that the darkness was not so thick but they could discern the land-marks, and beseeched him to have confidence in their knowledge and skill.

He was not however to be appeased by their protestations; on the contrary, the more they controverted his opinion, his anger waxed the fiercer, and he insisted, that if they would not go on as he ordered, they should return.

They told him it was then too late to return,

for the tide was drifting down ; but at last, by oaths and imprecations, they were induced to keep more out in a southerly course to sea, and towards morning, the Bass isle, grey and dark, was seen rising over the starboard before them.

Græme affected great alarm when he beheld the lofty rugged cliffs, and heard the heavy noise of the dashing sea, and of the clouds of the cawing sea-bird that hovered around the rocks, and he sullenly inquired, as one that fears, the name of the island to which they had betrayed him.

When they told him it was the Bass, he affected for a time a wild and fearful perplexity, saying, " Alas ! what shall become of me ?—Have I been set free from the pleasant heights of Stirling, but to be immured on these doleful rocks !" Then he suddenly seemed to recollect himself, saying, " But Sir Patrick Haliburton, the constable, is a true and loyal knight—I will tell him in what manner this misfortune has come upon us ; steer therefore to the landing-place,—I will crave his aid."

The mariners well knew that there was eminent hazard to all who dared to approach that prison-isle, when there was any person of dignity incarcerated there, and again would fain have refused the order, saying, that North Berwick was so hard by, that he needed not to go to the Bass, but only to steer straight to that port. He, however, drew his sword, and wounded one of them in the arm, for daring disobedience to his commands, after the peril they had caused him to pass, and the jeopardy into which they had brought him. So the men became afraid, and thinking he was not in his right mind, ceased to reason with him, but submitted themselves to do whatsoever he desired. Accordingly, he having ordered them to make for the landing-place, they lowered their sails and plied their oars with great vigour ; and when the boat was

brought under the wall, Græme made a sad memorial to the guard of what he had suffered from his contumacious and unskilful crew, entreating the soldier to inform the constable, Sir Patrick Haliburton, who he was, whence he had come, and whither he was going, and to crave his hospitality, until some other bark could be obtained to take him to Crail; for farther than he had come he would not go, save in stress of need, with mariners so unpractised as he had found those to be who had brought him thither.

Sir Patrick Haliburton, on hearing this plausible tale, much commiserated the misadventure of the petitioner, and came himself to the port, and very courteously invited Græme to land, telling him, however, that from his orders, he must of necessity hold him prisoner till he received instructions from the King.

"I know," replied Græme, "that you cannot do otherwise, and I am content to abide with you. It is, indeed, a thing not to be thought, that you, Sir Patrick Haliburton, would let me go free, knowing, as doubtless you do, that I was so lately imprisoned on a charge of treason; for as yet you cannot have heard of my pardon."

Sir Patrick was much won by this seeming frankness of Græme, and assured him, that though he must hold him as a prisoner, yet should he be as free as himself, and that he would do all things in his power to make him pleasant pastime, till an answer came to the report of the incident of his arrival.

"Am I, then, the only prisoner on the rock, that you propose to entertain me with such freedom!" said Græme.

"No," replied Sir Patrick, "it is not so; the Lord Walter Stuart is here."

"*The Lord Walter Stuart!*" exclaimed Græme, *as if in a great amaze*; "is he not yet at liberty? *I am* grieved to hear that, for you know, Sir

Patrick, we are near of kin—and—but—he need not be told by what accident I am here—for it is not fit we should hold any communion together. It would be an ill return for the King's grace to me, were I to hold any intercourse with one that stands so justly under the cloud of his royal displeasure."

"You speak, Sir Robert Græme," replied Sir Patrick, "as a gentleman and a true knight, who has received a great boon from his Majesty. But there can be no harm in visiting your kinsman in my presence. In sooth, he has of late begun to take his condition much to heart, and to fret impatiently at his fortune."

"Nay, Sir Patrick, it must not be so; I will not offer myself to the company of the Lord Walter," said Græme; "but you may tell him that I am on the rock, and it will be cheering news, I well know, when he hears I have been pardoned."

Thus, with well-dissembled policy, as they were ascending from the landing-place to the castle, did Græme gain upon the confidence of the constable, who was an aged knight of unspotted honour, and who executed his harsh office in so mild a manner, as to make captivity appear beneath his power almost as gracious as hospitality.

CHAP. XIII.

WHEN Sir Patrick Haliburton had conducted Græme into his own chamber in the castle, and ordered a repast to be set before him, he then went and told the Lord Walter, by what accident his kinsman had been thrown on the island. On coming back to Græme, they fell into discourse concerning the events of the time,—the Constable informing his wily guest of many things, which, though he knew well, yet he affected not to know, especially in what related to the disgrace and disasters that had fallen on the proud house of Albany.

“Beshrew me, Sir Robert Græme,” said Sir Patrick, “it is not kind nor courteous of you, to be so near your kinsman and not visit him, I shall offend no order in allowing you to see him: for, though my prisoner, I am not commanded to enforce upon him any unusual restraint. Poor gentleman! since he heard of the rigorous arrest of his father and brother, he has begun to droop apace. I have told him how perforce you have been driven hither—”

“Indeed!” replied Græme. “You would not thereby add to his comfort; for, knowing the peril of treason in which I so lately stood myself, he must have marvelled at learning I was here.”

“Not at all, not at all,” said Sir Patrick. “At first he seemed a little surprised, and was thoughtful; but he soon brightened, and begged *that I would let you come to him.*”

"It grieves me, Sir Patrick Haliburton," said the treacherous and wary Græme, "that he should have made a request so indiscreet. What can he have to say to me that may not be transmitted by you?—It would only multiply the dangers into which he has fallen, were we to hold any communion together. How does he bear with his prison? Though to be incarcerated is great adversity to one of such accustomed bodily activity, yet is he withal fortunate, compared with the close durance that his father suffers at Carlaverock under Sir Ralph Maxwell, of whose insolence to all that come within the ward of his keys you doubtless must have often heard; as for Edmonstone, who had charge of those that were with me in Stirling, I vow to God he has not the ruth of a Highland schore. He kept us apart in cells, as if we had been savage beasts, not Christian men, and made our dungeons echo with threats that he durst not have breathed to his own fancy in the free daylight."

"Aye, Sir Robert Græme," replied the Governor, "we are all in our trusts too prone to prove our power. But surely it becomes not the honour of knighthood to exasperate the griefs of the defenceless. For my part, I think the least of my duty, as Constable of the Bass, is the safe custody of the unfortunate men committed to my care: I feel myself bound to employ all charities wherewith anguish may be alleviated and privation solaced, to soften and sweeten the hardships of their lot. Truly it is to me, Sir Robert, matter of affliction that you will not visit your gallant kinsman. But if you will not go to his chamber with me, you cannot restrain me from bringing him hither; it is a grace that I cannot deny myself: nay, though it may at this time move your displeasure, I am

sure hereafter I shall stand the higher for't in your good opinion."

With these words, Sir Patrick Haliburton clapped his hands thrice, and an officer of the guard coming into the room he said—

"Go to the Lord Walter Stuart, and entreat for me the honour of his presence. Nay, Sir Robert, it must not be that you will go away. I pray you be seated again."

On the appearance of the officer Græme had risen, seemingly with the intention of retiring; but the earnest manner in which the old Knight addressed him, laying at the same time his hand upon his arm, and pressing him with the familiarity of good fellowship into his chair, obligated him to remain.

During the time of this hospitable contest, the officer, with three men of the guard, proceeded to the chamber where the Lord Walter was confined, and having delivered the courteous message from the Constable, they returned, bringing him with them, and entered the room just at the moment when his kinsman had resumed his seat, and before Sir Patrick had again taken his chair at the end of the board.

Hearing the clank of arms approaching the door, which was presently thrown open, Græme looked round, and beheld the officer, with a link in his hand, ushering the prisoner, who came behind him from a long dark gallery, towering in the port and pride of a princely manhood,—the three soldiers following in the obscurity of his shadow,—their arms gleaming dimly in the light, and their fierce visages scowling more fiercely, half lighted, half hid, as the troubled flame of the link flared in the currents of the wind.

Sir Patrick Haliburton, in homage to his high-born prisoner, rose from his seat, and Græme also rose; but there was an eagerness in his

manner that betrayed the animation of some feeling far different from the respectfulness of the aged Constable.

The officer, on entering the room, stepped aside as the noble prisoner came forward, and the three soldiers filled the door.

The Lord Walter Stuart was then in the prime of youthful vigour. His stature was majestic, and his complexion, tinged with the dark blood of his royal race, was so brightened with the ruddy hue of health and hardy pastimes, that he was justly accounted one of the comeliest knights in all Scotland. His eyes were bold and bright, and a pleasant arrogance in his smile, that bespoke admiration and homage, suited well with his proud demeanour and manly beauty.

Being a prisoner, he had neither dirk nor sword, nor baton; but he wore his breastplate of brass, inlaid with many a curious device of silver, representing thistles and fleur-de-lis, lions and griffins, and other honourable augmentations and pageantries of arms and chivalry. His surcoat was of green Genoese velvet, lined with yellow silk; and he wore a costly ruff of many folds, adorn'd with o'ersea embroidery, round his neck, and on his head a black Gascon cap, looped up over the right temple by a golden clasp, festened to a rich knot of garnets and other glittering stones, through which an eagle's feather was stuck, as it were with a careless bravery.

As he stepped towards the table he glanced aside significantly to Græme, who, apparently with a cold indifference, returned the salutation; and he stretched out his hand frankly to the Constable, and passing round the board took a seat at his right hand.

"I shall not know, Haliburton," said he, "how to repay you for all these civilities; but I did not expect, from what you had told me, that

I should be permitted to approach so penitent a proselyte as my kind cousin there."

The taunt in this speech was deprived of all offence, by the look with which it was explained, to Græme, who replied,—

"It cannot be, Lord Walter, that you imagine I was not sorely grieved to hear, when freed from confinement myself, you were still a prisoner in this place. But the accident which obliged me to take refuge here was so extraordinary, that, under all circumstances, you cannot, my Lord, but acknowledge I should have acted most unwisely, both in respect to your condition and my own, had I in any degree been forward to seek your company. Sir Patrick there will attest, that I gave to him good and sufficient reasons why I ought not to visit you; and if any ill henceforth arise, from our being brought in this manner together, I must be acquitted of all blame."

"Nobody will impute to Sir Robert Græme any motive beyond what he professes," replied the prisoner, with a smile that his kinsman understood; "but I think courtesy might have claimed, on such an occasion, something from loyalty. Had you been in my place and I in yours, Græme, I would not have so stood on my loyalty. However, take your own way; I am not the less obliged to our kind host—by no other name shall I ever recollect him—for this little interlude to the dulness of imprisonment. Pray, may I venture to ask if you know aught of my father and brothers?"

Græme looked towards Sir Patrick, and said,—"I am not aware what questions may be answered; but those who hear me," and he threw his eyes towards the officer and soldiers, "will bear witness to the reluctance I have had to this interview."

"Nay, nay, Sir Robert Græme," cried the unsuspecting Knight, "you are too chary in all this. You would make your noble kinsman feel the

thralldom of his condition more sharply than there is any need. What he has inquired becomes him as a Christian man. I beseech you, Sir Robert, to call to mind, that there are no prisoners at my board, whatever there may be in my custody. Here I esteem you as honourable guests, so use your pleasure ;” and he motioned to the officer to retire with the guard.

Græme then repeated, in a manner purposely not so clear as he had received it from Sir Patrick, all that the worthy Knight had told him concerning the Duke and the Lord Alexander.

“ But have you heard nothing of my brother James ? What has become of him ? How has he escaped ? Or why is he spared ?” cried the prisoner eagerly.

“ It was reported at Stirling,” said Græme, “ I know not how truly, that he was in Lennox gathering the vassals of your grandfather. This, however, was but a report—a mere report. Of what avail would it prove, even were it true ?”

“ Every thing,” exclaimed the Lord Walter exultingly. “ If the old spirit of the Scottish barons be not quenched, it will teach this new King of charters and statutes, what it is to treat so many of the nobility like hoseless varlets. I am proud to hear such bravery of my brother ; but it makes me feel what it is to be a prisoner.”

“ I must not, my lord, listen to such open approbation of rebellion,” replied Græme soberly ; “ and Sir Patrick will do me the justice to remember how willingly I would have avoided the topic.”

“ Truly, my Lord,” said Sir Patrick to his prisoner, “ it is too bold to say so much,”

At this crisis of the conversation, a bell without was heard, at the sound of which Sir Patrick started up and said—“ It is the signal of a barge from *Canty Bay*, and I must leave you for a few minutes.”

"This must not be, Sir Patrick," exclaimed Græme, hastily rising; "I will not be left alone with the prisoner: such a thing in these jealous times might entail ruin upon us all."

"I will nevertheless hazard it," said the old Knight laughing,—"I rely on your honour, Sir Robert, and what have I to fear?" so, hastily quitting the room, he left them together. The moment the door was shut, the Lord Walter threw himself into the arms of his kinsman, and embraced him with ardour and delight.

"Hush, and be calm," said Græme; "we have no time for protestations; we must act, and that alertly: I doubt not that by to-morrow orders will be received to set me ashore."

"I fear it is impossible to escape from this place," replied the prisoner; and before Græme had time to make any reply, the sound of some person in discourse with Sir Patrick Haliburton, returning towards the door, made them resume their seats, and to feign a shy taciturnity. When it was opened, Keith the Herald entered, and the Constable came after him, pale and much agitated, holding a warrant in his hand which Keith had brought to authorise him to receive the Lord Walter, and to conduct him to Stirling castle, there to abide his trial.

Neither the prisoner nor Græme were in any measure, at first, dismayed by this occurrence; on the contrary, they exchanged looks of confidence, and both, in the same moment, thought that a rescue in the course of the journey might be easily achieved; but it soon came to the mind of Græme, that he had deprived himself of the means of concerting any such enterprise, by having thrown himself into the place where he then was, and where he was obliged to remain till Sir Patrick Haliburton could be instructed concerning him. Before, however, entering more into his adventure at this time, it is requisite to rehearse the enterprises of the Lord James.

CHAP. XIV.

BISHOP FINLAY, in the course of a desultory conversation with Glenfruin, interspersed with divers petite goutelles in the Gaelic language addressed to the ladies, the which he delivered with so much engaging ecclesiastical decorum, that it made them almost smile and sometimes look aghast, and marvel why a celibacious man and learned clerk should think and chat so fidglingly of such gregarious pleasantries and recreations, —having ascertained that the chief was of opinion it would not be for the profit of the clan to join in any rebellion at that time, was returning on his shely, led by his Celtic guards, towards Balloch castle, when the Lord James and the Countess of Ross met, as rehearsed, on the verdant banks of the lively flowing Lieven.

Seeing their meeting afar off from the oppsite hills, and wondering at the apparition of such an assemblage, and fearing for himself because of the nature of his mission to the chief of the Glenfruins, he halted to await what might come to pass. And when he beheld the manner in which the Lord James dashed through the river, and how his followers bore away the Lady Sibilla, and when he heard the outcries of the Countess and her damsels, and witnessed the consternation of the Ross men, he was much troubled, especially when the Celts, who were with himself for a protection, began to scamper down the hill *to assist their friends, having no more respect for him than for the shely on which he sat.*

In a word, not well knowing what else to do, he resolved to proceed forthwith to Dumbarton, and give out there that he had not only severed himself from the cause of the Lord James Stuart, but had been instrumental in persuading Glenfruin, that very morning, to refrain from taking any part with the rebellious Prince. At the same time he was not the less secretly minded still to further the interests of the Lord James and the house of Albany by all imaginable means and stratagems,—so urging on the shelty, he proceeded towards the town, which in those days stood around the bottom of the castle.

Those of the train of the Countess of Ross in pursuit of the Lord James, when they saw the four and twenty Celts who were with the Bishop coming so fiercely towards them from the hill, halted, and were alarmed, believing themselves entrapped into some ambuscade, by which pause the fugitive escaped. The others who followed to rescue the Lady Sibilla were still more luckless; for the Lennox men of the Lord James' train threw themselves in between them and the officer who was bearing her away to the castle, and opposed the pursuit with a great demonstration of bravery.

Meanwhile the shouts and the cries, which arose on all sides startling the echoes, and the appearance of the officer with the fair Sibilla in his arms coming galloping to the castle, roused the retainers within, and the walls were manned, and a numerous party sallied forth to aid their clansmen. The Ross men, at the sight of this reinforcement advancing to the Lennox men, immediately retreated towards their lady, with whom they made all possible haste to Dumbarton, to implore Sir John Stuart of Dundonald, the Governor, to assist them to revenge the abduction and outrage.

The Knight of Dundonald having a sharp es-

pial on Balloch castle from the time when the Earl of Lennox was arrested, and knowing that the force assembled there would not contend with his in the open field, was the more easily persuaded by the Countess of Ross to undertake the recovery of her fair niece; and accordingly it was determined that, with a party of his own men and the gentlemen of her train, he should proceed the same evening to Balloch, and demand the restitution of the Lady Sibilla.

Now it came to pass that, soon after this enterprise had been so concerted, Bishop Finlay reached Dumbarton, and riding straight to the castle-gate, alighted, and ascended to the chamber where the Knight was consoling the weeping and afflicted Countess. There he presently won favour and confidence by the tale which he had contrived; and Sir John Stuart greatly commended his zeal and loyalty, and told him of all that he had himself resolved to do that night to revenge the wrong done to the Lady Sibilla, and the contempt which had been shown to the King's authority.

When the bold prelate heard this, he cogitated thereon; and discerning that the garrison of the town and castle would be so weakened by the force which the Knight intended to take with him to Balloch, that they both might be easily won, he bethought himself of sending word to the Lord James thereof, and also, by magnifying the power at Balloch, to induce Sir John to make the garrison he intended to leave still weaker. Accordingly, while sitting with him and the disconsolate Countess, he began to descant of the wonderful hardihood of the Lennox men, and of the invincible intrepidity and fearless dexterity of all the sons of the Duke of Albany, dwelling much on the prowess and bravery of the Lord James in particular,—to all which the Countess of Ross, in the delirium of her grief and panic,

bore exaggerated testimony, and so wrought on the Governor, that he resolved to leave the town and fortress in a manner defenceless for that night.

When Bishop Finlay perceived his insinuations work to such effect, he feigned himself to be more weary by his day's hard journey than he in truth was, and retired forth the castle to the Carthusian college, under pretext of abiding with the brethren till the troubles in that part of the country were so assuaged that he might travel in peace and safety to Icolmkill. But he was not long within the walls of the college when he called before him Friar Mungo, a sturdy and bold servitor, of whose address he had on other adventurous occasions made probation, and to him he thus broke his mind—

“You know, brother Mungo, that it is not befitting men of our peaceful calling to meddle with secularities, and that I have ever, as far as in me lay, set my face against all open or occult correspondence with wicked and evil-disposed persons. Whether the Lord James Stuart is a youth of that character I know not, but I would fain spare the effusion of blood, and therefore, brother Mungo, you will do a Christian office, if, in your own discreet way, you will go to Balloch and tell him, that the knight of Dundonald, with the Ross men, intends this night to demand, with the main part of all the power now in Dumbarton, the restoration of the Lady Sibilla Macdonald to the care of her aunt the Countess of Ross, and that if he is found in the castle he may be taken. Therefore my counsel to him is, to make preparation instanter to come to me here, while Sir John is on his way to seek him, and I doubt not I shall be able to show him how he ought to comport himself in this emergency.”

Friar Mungo greatly lauded the Christian mind

and temper of the Bishop, and replied with a smiling countenance,—

“It is a blessed business, my Lord Bishop, and I should lack of religious grace were I not to stir in it with an alert spirit. Be assured, my Lord, I will lose no time till I have delivered your pious counsellings and ghostly admonitions to the Lord James Stuart, for he stands in the peril of being an instrument of great slaughter among his enemies, who, though they be the adversaries of his father’s house, have yet souls to be saved;—and I will learn, before I set off, what road Sir John intends to take, that I may advise the Lennox men to keep another road; for were they to meet, alas! my Lord, there would be an effusion of blood which might go well nigh to break the heart of the Holy Virgin, and greatly disturb the beatitude of the saints that are with her in paradise.”

“You have a worthy compassion, brother Mungo,” replied the Bishop; “and I doubt not you shall be prospered in this good work; but I am concerned to think what may happen to the Lady Sibilla Macdonald,—poor tender young flower! did you ever see her, brother Mungo?”

“Often, my Lord Bishop,” exclaimed the Friar with fervour; “she is the most peerless maiden I ever sat eyes upon. The splendour of her beauty is most ravishing to behold;—her neck is of living ivory, and her bosom, my Lord Bishop—”

“I thought, brother Mungo, that there must have been some cause for this animal eagerness in the Lord James,” said Bishop Finlay gravely. “And she is indeed so very beautiful?”

“O verily, my Lord, her presence lends warmth to the air she moves in.”

Friar Mungo would have continued to expatiate still more salaciously on the blooming mai-

denhood of the Lady Sibilla, had not Bishop Finlay, in a tender-hearted manner, said, he thought it would be a most pious duty to rescue her from the danger into which she had fallen.

"Could not you, brother Mungo," said he, "contrive to get her transported from Bulloch to the bower in Inchmurin? Thither I would go myself and endeavour to console her till this feud is ended."

"It is softly thought," replied the Friar; "and my persuasion, with your request, shall not be wanting. I will go myself with her in the boat, and see her safe upon the island."

"No, brother Mungo," said the Bishop; "there can be no need of you to go with her; you must hasten back and let me know how you speed."

Friar Mungo at these words withdrew, not the less eager to execute the duty wherewith he had been thus missioned, by the command to urge the Lady Sibilla rather to take refuge in Inchmurin, where the Earl of Lennox had a summer bower, than to return to her weeping aunt the Countess of Ross.

CHAP. XV.

WHILE these machinations of war and subtlety were brewing at Dumbarton, the Lord James had returned to Balloch castle, where he found the Lady Sibilla safely warded, and, though much disturbed and shedding tears, right glad of heart to see him again. Nor was she backward to commend his address and spirit, nor slow to cheer him in the enterprise, which, like a loving son and true brother, he had undertaken.

“But,” said she, “I cannot conceal from myself the danger to which it has exposed you. The King may be moved to set your father and brothers free, but he will not be so easily moved to pardon rebellion in you.”

“I trust and hope,” replied the young Lord courageously, “that I shall not stand in need of his pardon,—for what he has done he may be brought to ask mine. When was it heard of, out of pagan land, that in one day a whole race of princes, the highest of the blood-royal, were denounced for traitors; and all that could be seized of them and their friends committed to prison?—Sibilla, when I see you here, and think in what circumstances you have been brought, and how the sky of our lot has been so clouded, can I have any other heart toward King James, than one of hatred and revenge? But now that I have you in my possession, let us never be parted again. Bishop Finlay, whom I expect here to-night from a kind mission that he went upon

yesterday to the chief of the Glenfruits, will bestow his benediction on our union, and we shall thenceforth be man and wife."

The lady Sibilla was as bold as she was beautiful; the pride and valour of her ancestry glowed in her blood; and though she loved her betrothed with the truth and ardour of gentle maidenhood, she could not abide the thought, that the high-born daughter of the Lord of the Isles should be wedded amidst the haste and hazard of an outlaw's adventures.

"No," said she; "though I shall not repine to be detained your prisoner, it neither befits your birth nor mine, to hold our wedding like the mating of a moss-trooper. I have no gentlewoman here to be my bridesmaid; and, under your sentence of outlawry, I know not if a marriage with you may be safely contracted."

"You cannot surely, Sibilla," exclaimed the young Lord, troubled by the doubt which her words implied,—“you cannot surely suspect my fidelity? What ceremony can bind me more to you than I am already bound? If you feel for me as I once did believe you felt, the very dangers in which I am placed should make you but the more eager to share my unhappy fortunes. To stand on forms, when I may have but a few hours to live, is to sacrifice to an idol what is due to a God. True love, Sibilla, admits of no such cold decorum. It is a living fire which overcomes all between it and the object of its aspiring flame. It makes me forget at this moment every impending peril, my birth, your condition, all all worldly considerations, and to think but of the happy accident that has brought us together—that has made you mine."

The lady hung her head, and sighing at the vehemence of his passion, remained for some *time sad and thoughtful.*

"You make me no answer," exclaimed her

lover. "What am I to divine from your silence? You have said you will not repine to remain my prisoner: why should you be a prisoner with me? Some kinder, dearer name, ought rather to describe your condition. Before the world and Heaven we were betrothed, and, as I thought, a holier tie than the terms of any human paction united our hearts; but I have been in error; it was not to me, it was to the son of the Regent of Scotland that you were contracted, and the dignity having passed from my father, your love has expired."

"Oh! say not so," cried Sibilla passionately, and in tears. "Think rather of the part which honour, the reverence due to my family, the feelings of my sex, and the helplessness of my condition, require that I should sustain till some friend is present to witness the willingness with which I am ready to prove my faith and my affection."

The Lord James, at these words, would have taken her in his arms; but she rose, and with a proud air said—

"No; that cannot be, my Lord. This is neither the time nor the place where we may yield ourselves to any fond fooling; but I will prove to you that I am not unworthy of the ardent love you profess, and that I will indeed share your fortunes, though I must refuse at present to be your wife."

Her lover was rebuked by the majesty of her mien; but hoping from her words that she intended to continue with him, he did not despair of overcoming the severity of her resolution, and often gazing on her for a moment with worship and admiration, he began to smile.

"Nay, my Lord," said she, "do not misinterpret my determination; though I will share your fortunes, and thereby prove my affection, yet shall *I not remain with you: I will not, however, so*

far acknowledge any doubt of my own fortitude, as to say that I fear to remain; but there is an homage due to fame which true love will never grudge, and in separating myself from you I pay that homage."

"In what way then," replied the Lord James, grieved and disappointed, "can you partake either of the hazards or the dangers that await me?"

"By performing the woman's part; first, by trying to avert both to the uttermost of my influence and ability, and then"—

"What then?" said the impassioned lover, melted by the tenderness of her accent.

"By mourning that I can do no more," she replied; adding more firmly, "It is not wise to think only of ill. The Queen is pleased to consider me as her friend; I will go to Scone, and entreat her benevolence with the King."

"And if he cherish for her," exclaimed the Lord James, "but the tithe of the regard that I bear to you, there is no boon nor favour in his gift that she shall not obtain."

While they were thus discoursing, Friar Mungo, whom Bishop Finlay had sent from Dumbarton, arrived in the castle, and his business being urgent, he was speedily admitted to the chamber where the lovers were breathing their fond assurances, and fostering their mutual passion by self-denial. He briefly told his message, and urged the young Lord to lose no time, but quickly to array his power and make for the town: "For," said he, "in the evening Sir John Stuart will be here, and his force is triple yours; but were you in possession of the town and fortalice, you might laugh at any power that could for a long time be brought against you."

Then Father Mungo looked towards Sibilla, and added—

"And my Lord Bishop, fair Lady, bade me

exhort you not to remain here, but allow yourself to be removed to the summer-lodge on Inchmurin.”—

“Why?” cried the Lord James, surprised at this message.

“I will speak freely,” replied the Friar; “for I doubt not, from what I see, that the Lady Sibilla is not averse to remain in the custody of her betrothed bridegroom.”

The lady, however, checked this bold familiarity, and requested to know, why it was that Bishop Finlay would have her treated as a prisoner?

“For the safety of our dear young Lord,” said Friar Mungo humbly. “If any reverse ensues from the expedition, he would have you, Lady, retained as an hostage by the Lennox men. As it is, the possession of you is something upon which to claim terms.”

The lady smiled at hearing this, and looking towards her lover, said—

“Is it so soon that I must begin to perform my promise? But glad I am, my Lord, that it is so. Yes, it is right to hold me as an hostage, and I shall rejoice that, by being in that condition, I may in any degree contribute to make the Macdonalds and their friends interpose their influence with the King in favour of the house of Albany.”

It was accordingly soon arranged, that Friar Mungo should convey the beautiful Sibilla in a boat to the bower on Inchmurin, while the Lord James proceeded, under cover of the woods on the banks of the river, with the garrison in the castle, towards Dumbarton.

CHAP. XVI.

WHILE Bishop Finlay and the Lord James Stuart were ripening their machinations, the King being informed of the same by a messenger from Glasgow, as before rehearsed, gathered his powers hastily together, and was advancing to frustrate their rebellious devices.

On the afternoon of the same day on which the Bishop missioned Friar Mungo to Balloch castle, his Majesty reached Glasgow, where he was minded to stop that night, and to come on next morning to Dumbarton; but learning there, that his traitorous kinsman was not in any great force, he resolved, after refreshing the army, to go forward in the evening, in order to come upon the Lord James before he was well prepared to resist him, and so to end a rebellion, the issues of which no man could foresee, who well considered the potency, number, and spirit, of the chiefs and nobles in factious league with the house of Albany.

Thus it came to pass, about two hours after set of sun, that while the worthy Knight of Dundonald, Sir John Stuart, with the garrison and many valiant burghers of Dumbarton, was advancing up the east side of the river Leven to attack the Lord James in Balloch castle, and while that adventurous young Lord, with the vassals and retainers of the Earl of Lennox, was *coming* unseen towards the town, through the woods and dingles that skirted the western mar-

gent of the stream, the King left Glasgow with the intention of reaching the loyal borough before midnight; so that, notwithstanding the sinister wisdom of Bishop Finlay's device, by which he expected to throw Dumbarton and its impregnable castle into the hands of the Lord James, divers motions and stirrings were coming to a head, by which that hardy young Prince was likely to be brought into woeful hazard.

Meanwhile, the bold and stout Friar Mungo, wholly intent to convey the beautiful Sibilla to Inchmurin, there to abide the event of the night, had provided a boat on the skirt of the lake to convey her from the shore to the island; and having so done, he returned to the castle soon after the departure of the Lord James with his force, and brought the weeping and trembling lady forth to conduct her to the place of embarkation.

By this time the twilight had deepened into the shadows of night;—the mist lay heavy on the hills;—Benlomond was wrapt up in a mantle of gloomy clouds, like a wizard meditating a spell:—the spirit of the winds darkened on the waters and moaned in the woods; and the boatmen, as they lay on their oars waiting for the friar and the lady, sometimes churmed a low and melancholy cronach, each to himself apart, and sometimes they would all suddenly be still and listen, and then inquire at one another, if it was not a shout which they had heard.

The path from the castle to where the boat lay was through a scattered wood of natural oak, the overarching boughs of which made it as dark as midnight; and Friar Mungo, as he led the lady by the hand, and from time to time turned back to cheer her, often banned the briers that caught the skirts of his cloak, more like a borderer than a holy priest engaged in ministrations of charity.

When they came near to the shores of the lake, a drizzly shower began to fall, which made Friar Mungo bid the Lady Sibilla halt under the shelter of the trees, while he went forward to prepare the boat for her reception; and the better to shelter her from the damp air of the night, he stript himself of his friar's cloak, and lovingly wrapt it about her, infolding her in his arms with a gentle pressure to his breast, thus manifesting his compâssion for her very piteous estate.

"Bonny Lady Sibilla," said a strange voice softly in her ear as soon as he had left her; and in the same moment a hand from behind the tree gently touched her on the shoulder.

"Who are you?" exclaimed the Lady, startled and terrified.

"Wheesht," said the stranger, "wheesht. Dinna be fear't, bonny Lady Sibilla; I'm but Anniple of Dunblane."

"Anniple! What has brought you here?" cried the Lady aloud, forgetting the admonition which she had just received.

"Wheesht,—wheesht," was the answer; for Anniple at the same moment stretched forth her hand and laid her fingers on Sibilla's lips, while she added—

"Ye're in the black of a shadow, Lady, the ill may pass, and it will na maybe."

"What mean you, Anniple?" replied Sibilla, in some degree quieted by feeling herself in the presence of one whom she had formerly known, though it was but the wit-wandered Spaewife.

"There's a foul thought in the Friar this night," said Anniple; "I heard it in his breathing—I saw it in his gait;—but gi'e me the cloak that he has given to you."

At that moment, the rustle of Friar Mungo *returning* was heard; and presently also the *oars* were heard moving the boat nearer towards

the spot where the pathway emerged from the wood.

The boat stopped—the Friar hastened to Sibilla—and a sound, deep, low, and murmuring, came drearily from afar off. One of the boatmen starting from the seat-board, rested one hand on his oar, and placing the other to his ear, in order to catch with more than the apert sense the rumour of the distant noise, remained listening, till one of his companions called his attention to the Friar returning with his agitated charge, who, as she approached the boat, drew the cloak he had so kindly lent closer around and over her head.

Friar Mungo spoke to her soothingly, but she made no reply. He assisted her into the boat, and she sat down abruptly, but spoke not.

The Friar, as soon as she was seated, also went on board, and placed himself in the most encouraging manner by her side. The boatmen rattled their oars between the tholepins, and pushed into the bosom of the lake. The skies were lowering, and the wings of the wind rainy;—the water broke black beneath the oars; and the blast, as it swept over the dark water, made the heart cower. It was a night to make helplessness feel its desolate condition, and weakness to cling to any protection. The boatmen plied their oars in silence. Friar Mungo, of all on board, was the only one that spoke; and his voice was gay. Often did his arm hover behind the lady that sat muffled beside him, as if he would have drawn it round her waist, and gathered her gently towards him; but reverence for the high condition of Sibilla awed the emotions with which he commiserated her lone estate.

As the boat proceeded towards Inchmurin, his reverential compassion however became *more familiar*; yet even to the purring kind-

ness and solicitude which he breathed into her ear she made no reply, which surprised him so much, that he was emboldened thereby to raise his hand to lift aside the cloak in which she had in-folded her head and face; but judge of his con- sternation, when the Spaewife flung her hands round his neck, exclaiming with a shrill ecsta- sy,—“ Ah! ye loon, ye loon, ye loon!”

Friar Mungo threw himself back from the enclaspings of her skinny arms; and while she chuckled and chattered at the fright she had given him, he growled with wrath and disap- pointment, and ordered the boatmen to return back and make for the nearest part of the shore. They accordingly did so; and when they were come to the foot of Glenfruin water, he seized Anniple by the arm, and dragging her from the bench whereon the harmless creature was sit- ting, cast her like a bundle of lumber over- board upon the strand, and commanded the ma- riners instantly to push off. They could not however do this so quickly, as to prevent Friar Mungo from hearing the malaisons of Anniple; for, though somewhat stunned by the shock, she soon scrambled to her feet, and vented her an- ger against him in many a wild imprecation, wherein she denounced him to the wuddy, the wave, or the well.

CHAP. XVII.

As soon as it was dark, the Knight of Dundonald, with his own power and the Ross men, set forward on their expedition against Balloch castle. He had not, however, long departed, when a rumour reached Dumbarton that the rebels, with the Lord James at their head, were approaching, and fearful was the panic that arose in the town at the tidings.

The inhabitants burst, as it were with one accord, out of their houses into the streets, and there was a rushing and a hurrying to and fro, and cries mingled with much talk, and marveling, and great alarm ;—mothers ran with their children they knew not whither ; many laden with moveables hastened into the fields ; the burgers armed themselves with what weapons they could find ; infirm old men stood in groups communing at the corners of the streets ; windows were lifted up, and all fires were extinguished ; bells rung and drums beat, and ever and anon a wail and shriek was heard, and a murmuring more terrible than the shouts of a tumult or the sound of any woe.

The Countess of Ross, in the consternation of the first alarm, ascended with her maidens to the highest parts of the castle, and stood long anxiously looking up the Leven ; but the moon was down, and the night was dark, and she could discern nothing, save where the town-lights *threw a dusky glare on the rugged cliffs of Dumbuck, and brought them gloomily into view, like*

the frowning forehead of some old and dreadful preadamite that hath its dwelling-place in everlasting darkness.

"What time is it, think you?" said the Countess to one of her maidens on whose arm she was leaning.

"It cannot be far from midnight; but not a star has peeped out to-night," replied the damsel, "and I have not heard the clock."

"It is a fearful time," resumed the Countess, "and the rebels cannot be far off;—see you how those lights collect and cluster together!—now they are scattering again! one is borne along in great haste. It is quenched!"

"The air strikes raw and cold here," said the damsel after a short pause; "will it not please you, madam, to return to your chamber?"

The Countess made no reply, but sat down on a ledge of the rock, and drawing her mantle close over her head, rested her chin on her hand, and continued looking in the direction by which the enemy was expected to come, and began to ruminate and sigh; which her three maidens and the matron who was their superior perceiving, gathered around, and began to discourse with each other, to comfort themselves and to draw their mistress from the sadness wherewith she appeared to be so heavily oppressed.

"I hope and trust," said one, "that we have nothing to dread. The king will be hither before the rebels, and though they may sack the town, they cannot win the castle."

"What will become of us," added another, "if they should, however, by force or fraud, get possession of the castle?—not one of us will be spared."

"We shall be left alive," replied the matron, "that I do not doubt; for I knew a lady that was in Roxburgh when it was burnt by the Earl

of Marche. Poor soul ! She told me that it was of no use to think of resisting."

"Ah me!" cried the one who spoke first, "what may have been done by this time to the sweet Lady Sibilla!"

"Surely," said the second, "the Lord James would do her no harm."

"Cease this idle prating," exclaimed the Countess, "and think more seriously of the perils with which we are surrounded. This is neither a fit time nor place for such frivolous discourse. It is now midnight,—the hour when Guilt and Treachery violate the universal confidence with which all nature receives the peaceful night. Conspirators now meet in lone and dismal places, and band themselves with oaths sworn in whispers. It is the time which, even in safety and peace, ought to move your spirits to more solemn reflections. The very thought of Sleep, lying down suspicionless in the lap of so blind a warder as Darkness, like an innocent child confiding in its aged nurse, might touch your hearts with the ruth of gentle sympathy for the defenceless in which half the world lies now fettered and exposed. Yet those in that state are more to be envied than they who are awake and abroad at this hour. Who would exchange the condition of the weary hind, as he lies on the ground blanketed with straw, a breathing clod, through the fog of whose dense slumbers the twilight of no dream ever breaks—so much does hard labour drug with insensibility the poor man's rest;—who would exchange his lot for that of the undivulged offender trembling on his bed of down? I was once told of an ermined judge, that was shaken awake at this hour from beneath his canopy of honours, by the vision of an old and wasted wretch whose sentence he had pronounced the day before. In his dream he beheld her *strangely changed* into one whom in his youth

he had thought passing fair, and whose beauty he was himself the first that sullied with shame, and he fell thereafter into an absent melancholy, and, it said, he never went to sleep any more. Think also, that haply at this hour some dying man may chance to awake from his perturbed slumber, and see the wife who seemed to attend him so kindly, sinking asleep in her chair beside his pillow, regardless of his last sighs, and he speechless and powerless, and by no stir nor sign able to rouse her. Such things and thoughts would better become your conversation at this time and in this place. Or ye might think of some fretted mother, chiding her wakeful and peevish baby, and pressing it, even in her anger, still more dearly to her bosom. Go to, ladies, ye lack of charity, and list not to the sermon which the midnight teaches. Ye speak of outrages, almost as if ye desired they might be. Shame on this girlishness ! O I could make your hearts weep drops of pityful blood, by a tale that was told me of a poor outcast and ruined maiden in a foreign land ? Once at this terrible hour, after a woeful course of sin, the sense of her fault and abject condition came so strongly upon her, that she went and laid her head on the threshold of her betrayer's door longing to die, and she saw the chariots of once kind companions returning from revels, where she could never enter,—but her heart would not break, nor her eyes shed any tear. As she lay there, the gallant, who had brought her to that sad estate, coming home, ordered his serving-man to cast her from the door ; but when they went to move her, she was dead. Alas, gentlewomen ? why, on such a night as this, should I have had such cause to rebuke you with such tales ? Yon stern and harsh sentinel, as he solitarily paces the wall, is, I doubt not, at this time ruminating *more piteously* than you have done. I knew an

old knight who had been in Palestine, and he told me of a fierce soldier whom he once, on visiting his post at midnight in a fortress in the Isle of Cyprus, found weeping like a child ; and, on inquiring the cause of such singular tenderness in one of his mettle, he told him that he had been thinking of the time when he was a playing boy, with the freedom of his father's house, to which he could never return, and the remembrance had made him sorrowful. And yet, ye who are women, made of a softer mould, can stand here at the dead of night, hearing the panic and terror that rage among yon defenceless burghers, and chat of the horrors of a town sacked as glibly as a seamstress of some giggling girl's incontinence. Fye, fye.

"Hark ! hear ye that ? They are come !" exclaimed the damsels, directing their eyes towards the town. The Countess started up, and hastened to the wall where the sentinel was walking. He had stopped for a moment on hearing the wild cry which had interrupted the Countess, but before she reached him, he was again slowly and with his accustomed strides pacing the wall.

"What think you was yon dreadful outcry ?" said the Countess and her gentlewomen, as it were with one voice.

"I suppose the enemy has entered the town," said the veteran, without halting or altering his slow and measured pace.

One of the ladies went to question him more particularly, but his answers were gruff and unsatisfactory.

"It may be Sir John Stuart come back," said the Countess to him.

"It may be," replied the soldier ; "but I don't think so."

"What is your reason for being of that opinion ?" inquired the Countess.

"You heard the cry as well as I did ; every body might know what that meant," was the sentinel's answer, which he spoke in the same rough manner, and without altering the regularity of his step.

"Holy Virgin! what shall be our fate?" cried the elderly matron, the superior of the Countess's gentlewomen. The soldier laughed in scorn of her terrors ; but another wild and shrill shriek, followed by a loud and trampling sound, and a continued cry, and the sudden extinction of many of the lights in the town, silenced for some time all further parley. The sentinel stood still,—the women trembled,—and the Countess, retiring a little way, sat down again on the rock, and covered her ears with her hands, to deafen herself from the shouts, and the raging noise and fearful cries, that every moment grew louder and wilder in the town below.

"The work has begun," said the sentinel to the ladies, and attempted again to pace the wall as before ; but his steps were now sometimes short and quick, sometimes slow and firm, and now and then he halted and looked and listened.

"I did not expect," said he, "that the town's-folk would have made any resistance. It's brave of them, however."

At that moment a loud and general shout arose from another side of the town, opposite to where the tumultuous noise had begun, and the soldier clapped his hands with joy, and cried, "Our men have returned ! Now the rebels will have play for the game."

Scarcely had he said the word, however, when a thick smoke arose in different parts of the town, and it was soon evident that the rebels had fired the thatch roofs of several houses.

"Well ; I'm glad of this," said the soldier : "they mean to let us see something."

"Glad !" exclaimed the Countess, coming

again towards the rampart,—“they have fired the town!”

“They have,” replied the sentinel, stepping briskly out, as the spreading flames shed a red and dismal light on mountain, tower, and tree, making the waters of the Leven and the Clyde seem as if they were of blackness, mingled with fire.

As the burning brightened, the rage and the roar of the battle in the streets grew fiercer and louder, and the fighting was as manifest as if it had been under the mid-day sun. The glimmer of the swords, in the light of the flames, was like the sparklings from the hammers of a thousand forges, and where the brave burghers had bolted their doors and fenced them within, the Lennox men battered with stakes of timber, the sound whereof was as the sound of many anvils amidst the crashing of a sudden destruction.

While the fighting was in the utmost fury, and the conflagration was rushing from house to house, and flapping its wings of flame as it were in triumph and exultation, as roof after roof sunk in under the gloomy towers of smoke and fires that reached to the clouds, one of the ladies, by the glare of the burning, which dismally lighted up all the surrounding country, and showed the neighbouring fields strewn with household goods and troops of women and children, discovered the King's army from Glasgow rapidly advancing. It was soon evident that the news of the royal approach was known in the town, for the Lennox men began to flee in different directions, and a bark that lay at anchor under the castle was seen hastily unmooring. The Countess herself saw the Lord James and Bishop Finlay, as it passed along, standing on the deck, escaping from the vengeance which they had provoked, and with which their raid *was so speedily overtaken.*

CHAP. XVIII.

THE Lady Sibilla, after the departure of Annie with Friar Mungo, stood for some time trembling with the timid fancies natural to a young and delicate maiden left alone in a dark and solitary place. Scarcely did she venture to hope, that she might be able to find again the path by which she had been brought from the castle ; nor was she willing to return, even could she have found it, lest she should fall into the hands of Sir John Stuart. To remain in the gloomy wood till morning, was also very dismal to think of ; for every stir she heard around made her shudder, and fancy it the passaging of some cold and crawling inhabitant of the brake or fen. But where, or which way could she go ? If she went farther into the wood, she might wander herself into greater dangers than those with which she was already environed. To walk the margin of the lake seemed her only choice ; but when morning was come, what could she then do ? Her fears swarmed as she ruminated ; and she began to pace the shore in a very disconsolate and wild manner, unconsciously moving in her distress farther and farther from the spot where she stood at first, till she approached the banks of the Leven, and was surprised by the sound of the rushing water near her, which she had not remarked before.

She stopped and listened, and while standing on the river's brink, she perceived a fiery dawn kindling in the air, and heard, from time to time,

the far-off sounds of tumult and commotion breaking through the stillness of the night. It was the battle and the burning of Dumbarton, which she soon understood ; and other thoughts and cares than anxiety for herself then arising, she hastened down the river's bank, to see, to listen, and to learn how it fared with the enterprise of her lover.

She had not proceeded far, when she discovered, by the dim blaze of the distant conflagration, a boat fastened to the bank, on board of which she quickly stepped, and untying the rope by which it was held, allowed herself to drift down the placid current.

An eddy of the stream, however, soon carried the boat to the opposite side, where, the bank being smooth and open, she landed, and continued to hasten towards the town, the blazing roofs of which had by this time awfully lighted up the surrounding hills.

While thus hurrying forward, she fell in with bands of women and children flying from the scene ; but to her inquiry they only replied with their own terrors and alarms, and hastened away they knew not whither. At last she came to a spot where an aged man and his wife, unable to travel farther, had sat down to rest themselves ; and the old man told her, with some moderation of grief, that the Lord James had entered the town, but that Sir John Stuart having come back soon after, the Lennox men set fire to the houses, and were sacking and herrying without ruth, remorse, or any touch of human pity. But his wife was demented, and ever and anon, as she watched the growth and progress of the burning, she shrieked with the voice of despair, and clapped her hands, and bewailed the desolation of their dwelling.

The Lady Sibilla was not, however, long permitted to condole with these unfortunate per-

sons ; for the rising flames being seen over all the country, a band of the Glenfruits, headed by their young Chieftain, came down from the mountains to watch what chance they might have of spoil by hovering on the skirts of the town. As soon as she saw them draw near, she was encouraged by their appearance, and making herself known, entreated to be conducted to a place of safety, where she might await the issue of the contest. The young Chieftain, proud to aid so high-born and so fair a lady, readily acceded to the request, and proposed forthwith to guide her to Glenfruit ; but the night being far spent, and she was already so much harassed by what she had endured as to be then unable to undertake so long a journey, therefore he could only assist her to a sheiling on the neighbouring hills, in which, having spread a couch of plaids and heather, he warded her with his men without, while she endeavoured to compose herself to sleep within.

Meanwhile, Friar Mungo, after the abhorrence with which he had cast Anniple overboard, having sailed into the bosom of the lake, found himself much perplexed. He durst not venture to return to Balloch Castle, lest he should find it in the possession of the Knight of Dundonald, and he bewildered himself with vain guesses concerning the accident, for such he deemed it, by which he had brought away the loathly Spaewife instead of the beautiful Sibilla.

In this perplexity, as he at one time directed the boatmen to make for Inchmurin, and at another for the shore, he, too, beheld the reddening glare of the burning town, and, much aghast and apprehensive thereat, he knew not what course to take, but was altogether overwhelmed with anxieties and fears. In this state of alarm and consternation, he happened to observe a glimmering light high on the shore ; and inquir-

ing where it was, and being told that it was in the castle of Glenfruin, he resolved to go thither, and address himself to the hospitality of the Chieftain, of whom he had some knowledge and acquaintance. He was accordingly landed as nigh as possible to the castle, and reached the gate shortly after the departure of the young Chieftain on his expedition. Having made himself known to the warder, he was at once admitted, and guided into the hall, where Glenfruin and four or five of his stalwart kinsmen and guests were still sitting at the board, and engaged in a vehement controversy concerning the exploits and pedigree of the Macfarlane of Finnart, a son of whom had made matrimonial overtures for one of Glenfruin's daughters. A wooden stoup stood on the board before them, from which they, as need required, filled a horn to refresh themselves; and the name of the drink which they were drinking came therefrom to be itself called horn, a word which, in the language of the Celts, signifies the life of feasts. The visages of Glenfruin and his friends were shining and flushed; their eyelids were heavy, but their eyes glittered and twinkled in a very lively manner, and the words of their discourse were cumbersome, and often conglomerated in the utterance.

"Sowlls and podies! Faider Mungo," said the Chieftain as the Friar entered, "and will ye be tere te night? Sowlls and podies! and whar will ye pe travel? Sa ye te toun purning? Sowlls and podies! Faider Mungo, a praw ting tat's for te laads wi' te Lord Hemies. Sowlls and podies! put when te King comes—oomph."

A seat on a form by the fire was set for the visitor, and a horn of horn was filled for him, of which he slightly tasted, and placed it at his elbow, while one of the sorners in the hall brought him some cold venison for supper.

While he was eating, a lean and yellow hand,

stretched from a dark corner behind him, took the horn away, and presently replaced it on the table. Glenfruin, the only person present who observed this, looked round with one of his expressed oomphs, and a smile appeared to brighten amidst the austere wrinkles of his hard features, like the tufts of the tardy verdure of spring among the seams and rents of his native rocks.

"Sowlls and podies! Faider Mungo," said he, with a significant wink to his compeers, "is't a-to-be-surely that ye'll no pe trinking te horn."

The Friar took it up, and in raising it to his lips, surprised to find it empty, looked shrewdly and queerly at Glenfruin; but the Chieftain, without affecting to notice him, exclaimed—

"Sowlls and podies! and ye'll no ha'e gotten a ca'ker yet?" on saying whilk he took the horn and filled it, and while the Friar resumed his eating, he placed it again beside him, and looked round to the dark corner whence the skinny hand had come forth, and presently the horn was again taken away, and again replaced as before.

"Pe pleased, Faider Mungo," said Glenfruin, "to tak te drink. Sowlls and podies! we're al waiting for't, Faider Mungo—oomph."

The Friar again took hold of the horn, and glancing his eye into it before raising it to his mouth, he smiled, and seemed at a loss to understand what such a mysterious evasion of the liquor portended.

"Sowlls and podies! Faider Mungo, has te proonie ta'en away al te horn?—oomph."

"Broonie!" exclaimed the Friar alarmed.

"Jesu Maria! is there such a spirit about this house?"

"Oo', aye, it's a to-be-surely tat we hae a proonie, Faider Mungo—oomph."

Before the Friar had time to inquire farther, a loud and wild laugh behind made him start aghast to the opposite side of the fire, and in the

same moment, the Spaewife came forward into the light, and made towards him with outstretched arms to embrace him in a facetious manner. But suddenly pausing as she advanced, her gestures altered, and she bent forward and looked at him for a short space, and then turned away shuddering with horror.

“ Sowlls and podies! Anniple o’ Dunplane !” exclaimed Glenfruin, rising from his seat in evident terror ; “ and will ye pe seeing wi’ te second sight, and what will ye pe seeing? Sowlls and podies !—oomph.”

“ He has a head, yet saw I nane,” replied Anniple, looking askance at the pale and frightened Friar ; “ and where it is and should have been. Och, och, dinna speere !” and then she began to sing in her careless heedless manner,—

“ And bold Sir Altan he bent him down,
And he drew his sword so bright,
And wi’ ae flash o’t, through banes and brains,
He cleft the head o’ that Knight.”

In the sequel it came to a hearing, that Anniple, who was in the practice of roving over the country, and well known in consequence, both in town and tower, had, after the Friar so uncivilly threw her ashore, gone to Glenfruin’s gate, and obtaining admission, had made her quarters good in the castle. There were indeed few places where she was more revered than in the hall of Glenfruin ; and she had but just gathered herself up into a knot in a corner behind the Chief to sleep, when Father Mungo arrived. It also came to pass, that Glenfruin discerning there was some cause of controversy between the Spaewife and the Friar, sifted them in his own way, by which he acquired at last some account of the Lady Sibilla’s abduction ; and suspecting that *Father Mungo was more in connexion with the rebels than he pretended to be*, he addressed

himself more particularly to him, leaving Annie to retire again to her corner.

"And so, Faider Mungo," said Glenfruin, "and will ye pe on a spial for te side o' te Lord Hemies?—oomph; put, sowlls and podies! Father Mungo, what will te King say?—oomph. Laads! laads!" exclaimed the Chieftain in a loud voice, and presently half a-score of grim Glenfruins, who were sleeping on the floor at the far end of the hall, came rushing to him. "Laads," said he, "ye'll tak Faider Mungo, and poot him down intil te hole, and we'll mak a judification te morn."

The Friar began to remonstrate as the sorners laid hold of him to drag him away; but he was soon taught that neither remonstrance nor supplication would avail

"Sowlls and podies! Faider Mungo," said Glenfruin, "ye'll be going like a civility, or maype we'll mak a judification te night.—Laads, tak him pe te legs and te arms."

So ordered, the Glenfruins seized the unfortunate Friar, and carrying him forth the hall, took him to the mouth of a deep pit, into which they lowered him in a bucket to the bottom, where they left him for the night.

CHAP XIX.

YOUNG GLENFRUIN, after placing a watch round the sheilling where the Lady Sibilla lay, sent down a party of his men towards Dumbarton, to learn how the battle had ended ; and about sunrise they returned with the tidings of the arrival of the King, the ruin of the rebels, and the flight of the Lord James and Bishop Finlay, in an Irish bark for Carrickfergus.

While the men were relating the news, the Lady came out of her lowly shed, relieved from the feverish embraces of a troubled and dreamy sleep, by the dissonance of their tongues as they told their tidings.

When informed of what had come to pass, she stood for some time pensive and silent, and hung her head as if her heart had been wrung and her spirit sick. She then sat down on the thymy bank, and covered her face with her gentle hand, and sighed, and began to weep. The men who were with Glenfruin retired to a distance, reverencing her sadness ; but the young Chieftain hung over her, and wist not what to say or do to console her extreme sorrow.

After some time she became more composed, and rising from the ground she looked towards the town, whereof but the ruins lay smoking around the foot of the castle, and the tears dried on her cheeks, and her beauty became stern ; and there was scorn on her lip, and ire in the flashes *that lightened from those eyes which hitherto had beamed so brightly with the light of love.*

"This war is not ended," said she to herself, and she looked round and eyed the young Gloufruin, as if measuring the zeal and bravery of his character; but in another moment she averted her eyes, and looked to the town, and again sat down on the ground, and nourished the revenge which was new-born to her bosom.

Seeing how much she was agitated with a vehement struggle, the young Chieftain felt himself abashed, and retired towards his men. He was awed by her august mien, and the fortitude with which she contended with herself. Sarcasm, however, had he left her, when she turned towards him, and with a smile that was meant to be gracious, but which the vengeful pride of her spirit darkened, as the eclipse does the lustre of the moon, she waved her hand, and beckoned him to draw near.

"Though I cannot doubt," said she, "that the Countess of Ross is with the King, and that immediate search will be made for me, yet will I not go to her, but still proceed with you to the castle, where, when I have conferred with your father, haply I may require your service;" and she smiled upon him again in so meek and gentle a mood, that the wish she had expressed he felt as a command which he could not but obey. Nor indeed was he sparing of his assurances to do all, by art or arm, that she might be pleased to require him to perform.

To this youthful ardour she made no reply, prepared to go with him to the castle; and though sometimes in the journey along the sides of the hills she endeavoured to discourse with him of light and indifferent themes, her thoughts wandered to the blasted fortunes of her lover. Sometimes she lingered behind and melted in tears; and sometimes her step became proud: her carriage resolute, and she pressed forward.

with the dauntless spirit of the Lords of the Isles.

The young Chieftain, as soon as she intimated her intention of still going with him to the castle, sent forward a messenger to apprise his father that the daughter of Macdonald was approaching, in order that all might be duly in readiness for the reception of so honourable a guest. Thus it happened, that when they ascended the hill on which the castle stood, Glenfruin himself with his wife and daughters, and all the inhabitants of his hall, were marshalled before the castle-gate in their gayest attire.

Lady Glenfruin and her two daughters stood with their fingers daintily pressing their bosoms; and with erect heads, and visages endeavouring to smile, they solemnly sank themselves down to the ground, and pausing for a moment in the elaboration of their homage, they then slowly ascended into the stately steadfastness of their first position. The Chieftain himself advanced, cap in hand, to meet the Lady Sibilla, and brushing the ground with his bonnet as he bowed in giving her welcome, said—

“It’s a consternation of pleasantries, mi laidie, that ye will pe coming al pe yourself, mi laidie, for an honour to the shielling of Clanfruin.” In saying which, he glanced with a majestic eye to the magnificent castle of three windows, two turrets, and a single lum. “Sowlls and podies, mi laidie !” he continued, “is’t a to-be-surely, tat ye’re wi’ a nopody, and a naething put yourself here?—Oomph.”

The Lady Sibilla paused for a moment, and looked around with a disconsolate eye on all that scene of their utmost grandeur which the Glenfruins exhibited; but quickly subduing the anguish of the moment, she replied to the Chieftain’s courtesy—

“I doubt not, Glenfruin, that you have heard

of what has befallen me,—but my father's daughter among Highlanders can only find friends. My desire is to be assisted back to the Queen,—and I throw myself, Glenfruin, on your honour and hospitality, as I did last night, in my extremity, on the gallantry of your son."

"Ooh aye, mi laidie," exclaimed Glenfruin, "te plood and te pones, and al tat of te Clanfruin pe at your molestation, mi honourable laidie, Seebeila Mactonald.—Oomph!"

"Enough," replied Sibilla. "I can ask no surer pledge for a safeguard than the word of Glenfruin. I give myself to your protection, and you will see me safely restored to my royal mistress, the Queen."

"Sowlls and podies! Laidie Seebeila, is Clanfruin a hallanshaker to make a commodity?—Oomph!—Ye will be pleased, mi laidie, to come in for an eatible, and ten we'll tak you al as ye will; curse tak me, laidie, but we will, every mother's son of us.—Sowlls and podies! daughter o' te Mactonald More.—Oomph!"

The golden ore of Glenfruin's character Lady Sibilla soon perceived, and at the conclusion of this speech she laid her hand in his, and was led by him up into the ladies' portion of the castle, where he left her with his wife and daughter, while he returned to execute the business of the morning in the hall; which, when he had done, he again went to her, and said—

"Noo, my laidie Seebeila, ye will hae had a confection, and we would gie you a pastime gratis to te pargain, pe a judification—Oomph!—Faidier Mungo of Dumbarton.—Sowlls and podies! mi laidie, he's te pe made a tead man; as you know, mi honourable laidie, he's a repelious espial.—Oomph!"

Sibilla knew well the kind of justice administered there, and though, both by what she had

observed, and what she gathered from the Lady Glenfruin and her daughters, as instructed by Anniple, she questioned not the justice of the doom pronounced on the Friar, she said—

“But surely, Glenfruin, you will give the poor man time to make some defence?”

“Oo aye,—he would mak a tefence,—oomph! —Put, sowlls and podies! mi laidie, if we would pe hearing tefences, whar would pe te justice o’ our judifications?—O, no, mi laidie, Faider Mungo te man,—he’s a killt, tat’s a to-be-surely.—Oomph!—Put will te honourable laidie pe pleased to behold te hanging, for he’s a praa strong, and will pe te fish on the hook. Curse tak me put he will!”

While Glenfruin was thus inviting the Lady Sibilla to the pleasure of seeing Father Mungo hanged, one of the sorners belonging to the hall came and told the Chieftain, that the Friar would not come out of the pit.

“Aye,” said Glenfruin, “he’ll no pe coming out of te hole?—Aye, aye, and so he will no pe willing to pe hang’t like a Christian man. Sowlls and podies! tell him frae me, that he will be pleased to come up and tie a natural death.”

The messenger went to the pit, at the bottom of which the Friar sat, and around the mouth stood many of the Glenfruins with Anniple, all looking down at the unfortunate churchman.

“Take care o’ your hern-pan, Father Mungo,” cried the Spaewife.

“Come up and be hanged, and not anger the Chief,” said one of the Glenfruins; but Friar Mungo made no answer, and the man a second time going to report his contumacy, was met by Glenfruin coming himself, who, when he reached the mouth of the pit, looked down and cried—

“Is tat Faider Mungo? And will ye no be pleased, Faider Mungo, to be hang’t in a peaceable—Sowlls and podies!”

"I protest," replied the Friar, "against the whole of these proceedings. How can you think of treating a churchman in this way?"

"Oo aye. Put wha te teevil's to find te fault? Faider Mungo, ye'll just come up and pe hang't, tat's what ye will."

"I will not move from this place—I will not submit myself to any such injustice."

"Sowlls and podies! laads," said Glenfruin, addressing himself to the sorners around him, "ye will pe taking a pig stane in your twa hands."

"Take care of your pow, Father Mungo," rejoined the Spaewife, while the Glenfruins went to fetch stones.

When they were come back, each with a heavy fragment of rock, Glenfruin went again to the mouth of the pit, and looking down, said—

"And so ye will no be pleased to come up and be hang't like a Christian?"

"I again protest against this most lawless and absurd proceeding," replied the Friar.

"Laads, fling in te stones," said Glenfruin; and the men threw in the stones. A shriek was heard,—a rattling noise,—then a groan,—and then there was silence.

CHAP. XX.

the speed wherewith the King had gathered his
ces, and marched to quench the rebellion in
Lennox before it was well kindled, struck such
terror into the faction of the house of Albany,
that even Sir Robert Græme was smitten with
amazement, that for a time took from him all
power to prepare any plan; so strange a thing
was it then in Scotland to see the government
advance itself without regard to persons or par-
ties. Being liberated from the Bass isle on
the second day after the Lord Walter was re-
vived therefrom by the herald to Stirling, he
was struck with consternation, that the King had
marched against the Lord James and Bishop
Glencairn, and that, notwithstanding the great
aid it was rumoured they were making, and
which their friends magnified to intimidate their
adversaries, had none slackened the orders given
to bring Duke Murdoch, with his sons and the
Earl of Lennox, to judgment. So much indeed
was Græme confounded by such resolution and
courage, that, when put on shore at North Ber-
wick, he lingered there, forgetful of the tale of
pilgrimage which he had published, to dis-
seminate the intent of the voyage that brought him
to the Bass. Nor thought he of the suspicion
which he thereby caused to breed against him-
self; but only felt the frustration of his strata-
gem as a new incitement to revenge, till awakened
from his wonder by the news of the total dis-
solution of the rebels at Dumbarton; the which

news taught him it would be an ineffectual adventure to attempt at that time any enterprise for the deliverance of the prisoners. He therefore resolved to await in quietude the issue of their trial; and accordingly next day sailed for Crail, and performed his pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Rule, in St. Andrews, in a very exemplary manner.

Meanwhile the Lady Sibilla, under the protection of Glenfruin himself, was conveyed to Scone, where the Queen had been left. Her purpose in going thither, was to work upon the benignant spirit of her Majesty, to the end that she might endeavour, with all her blandishments, to mitigate the King's anger against the house of Albany, especially towards the boldest offender in its treasons, her lover, the Lord James.

When she arrived at the Abbey-palace, the Queen was walking in the garden with one of her ladies, and she immediately went to join her there; but, as she approached the spot, the thought of what she had undertaken, the fears and the doubts of the reception she might meet with, for so far overstepping the modesty of maidenhood, in appearing as the declared bride and advocate of an outlaw, made her hesitate to advance. For although Queen Joanna was of a mild and gracious nature, and much inclined by the gentleness of her own heart to entertain all solicitations of mercy and charity, yet was she so strict and pure in the decorum of her sex, that she regarded few faults more rigidly than those which, by their boldness, seemed unbecoming the diffidence that is so comely in woman.

At the time when the Lady Sibilla entered the garden, her Majesty was standing with that renowned maiden and gentlewoman, the fair *Katherine Douglas*, and very gaily attired, as her custom ever was, in order that she might, by example, teach the ladies and dames of the realm to

acquire those habits of courtly manners which are put on with the garments of ceremony. Her golden hair was gathered within a net of pearls, adorned with a precious ruby, and many a sapphire emerald. On her brow she wore a chaplet of red and white and blue feathers, sprinkled all over with spangles, and intermingled with jonquilles and sprigs of broom; around the fair enamel of her neck was a golden chain, from which depended a ruby shapen like a heart, which, as it lay on the ivory of her bosom, seemed as if a living fire had been taken from the altar of true love, and laid to beam and glow in that beautiful place. By the one hand she held her robe of lustrous satin loosely up from the dewy grass, and with the other she leant upon the shoulder of Katherine Douglas, smiling on the flowers timidly peering from their buds, as it were to see if the spring was indeed come again.

A little page, who accompanied the Lady Sibilla into the garden, perceiving her hesitation, went forward and told the Queen of her arrival; and her Majesty, dropping the train of her robe, came quickly to meet her, and taking her by the two hands, not only prevented her from performing the accustomed homage of kneeling, but kissed her in a sisterly manner on the cheek; then drawing one of her hands gently through her arm, she waved to Katherine Douglas to retire, and led her to a bower where they sat down together. But, notwithstanding all this tenderness and ardour, Sibilla was unable to speak, till her heart was relieved by weeping; at last, encouraged by the soothing sisterliness of the Queen to break the business on which she had returned to Scone, she related the accident of her adventure at Balloch, and thence took occasion to remind her Majesty, how natural it was for her to sorrow and deplore the ruin which impended over the house of Albany.

"Alas! madam," said she, "Duke Murdoch is a man whose simplicity is his greatest fault. He is without guile, and altogether disposed to be harmless, and kind, and good, and which is the better part of goodness, to think well of every body without adverting to their humour, affection or prejudices. He cannot have done ill, but as an instrument in the hands of others."

"Then is there," replied the Queen, "the less cause to fear that he will suffer any greater penalty than the arrest under which he now lies; for it cannot be, that were he found guilty, the King would bring so near a kinsman, and so great a man, in old age, to any heavier punishment; so be not cast down on his account."

"But if your Majesty knew the Duchess," said Sibilla.—

"I have heard great things of that noble lady," replied the Queen, "and I have marvelled that she has never come to see me."

"She is indeed," exclaimed Sibilla, "the paragon of mothers. That she comes not to court is natural, considering how she herself was so long all but in name the queen. It may be of the infirmity of our sex, that she is loath to appear less than she was. Albeit, I do not think so; but rather, that it proceeds from the very excellence of her character, knowing, as she does, that the Duke, from his easy nature, may have fallen into fault, and grieving for those things in her sons, which, however old as the free usages of the Scottish nobles, accord not with the milder customs that the King so labours to establish, she can have no heart to be at court, where the show of that reverence, which her wisdom would instruct her to pay to his Majesty and your royal self, might be considered with jealousy, as assumed to win indulgence for her children. But were any grace dispensed towards them, I know, from the warmth of her affections, that the winds

would be slow to the speed wherewith she would seek to testify her gratitude by throwing herself at your Majesty's feet."

"Then," said the Queen, "rest you assured, that I shall not fail to urge the King so to appease the rigour of justice as to bring speedily such an ornament of womankind to his court."

The Lady Sibilla was for that time content with this assurance, and their discourse began to be of a less earnest kind.

"Know you, Sibilla," said the Queen, "that our young kinsman, the Lord Robert Stuart, nephew and heir to the Earl of Atholl, and who has but lately, for the first time, come to court, speaks of you with the zeal of a worshipper. I would it might be, Sibilla, that you were free to choose. He is the handsomest gallant that I have yet seen in Scotland; there is not one who, either for carriage, spirit, or courtesy, may compare with him; and not less highly born than the sons of the Duke of Albany."

Sibilla blushed, and for a short time made no reply; then she said softly—

"Does your Majesty forget that I was betrothed to the Lord James, and that, but for this unhappy distraction of fortune which has driven him to such extremity, we should have been married? I may not think of any other."

"Nay," replied the Queen, "it cannot be, that you should know the very excellent qualities of Stuart and not prefer him. There is not a nobleman of his years whom the King so esteems as a companion."

Sibilla again became thoughtful; which the Queen observing, took her by the hand, and said—

"I doubt not that his Majesty could easily obtain from the Pope's Holiness a dispensation to dissolve the contract, by which, in nonage, you were so unfortunately betrothed to the Lord

James. I am told, that neither of his brothers, no, not even the libertine Lord Walter, is less deserving of your affection. He is, they say, the fiercest and proudest of the three. Leave him to the issues of his fate, and think of what I have been telling you concerning the adoration of Stuart."

Sibilla's bosom heaved with sorrowful sighs, and the tears rushed into her eyes as she exclaimed—

"Alas! to what am I destined!" and she shuddered, and began to weep bitterly.

The Queen was much surprised to see such violence of grief; but thinking it arose from the persuasion which Sibilla had of the truth of what she was saying of the Lord James, she endeavoured to console her with the assurance that the King would leave no influence untried to procure a dissolution of the contract.

"Oh! it is not that which afflicts me," cried Sibilla, with the sharp accents of misery. But suddenly exerting herself, she dried her eyes, and said, "I should have more pleasure in knowing that the Duchess of Albany's anxieties were softened by any grace to her family, than in being released from my betrothment to the Lord James."

The Queen, not perceiving the double sense of these words, renewed the assurances of her best and earliest endeavour to procure some abatement of the severe measures which were in process against the house of Albany, adding,—"But come; I have no will, had I the power, to rule one so discreet and wise as my dear Sibilla in any business of the heart. Let us, therefore, say no more of it at present, but come to my chamber."

So saying, the Queen rose; and taking her by the hand, led her to the gate, and they ascended

to the royal chamber, where, with the other ladies of the court, they spent the remainder of the day with the tuneful jingle of the virginal and melodious songs, intermingled with pleasant discourse.

CHAP. XXI.

WHEN the King had restored peace at Dumbarton, he came to Stirling, where, on the night before the day appointed for the trial of his uncle, the Duke of Albany, with his two sons, and their maternal grandfather, the Earl of Lennox, he held a solemn council in the castle, at which the greatest and wisest men then in all the realm met; and a jury consisting of twenty-one peers was nominated, of whom the Earl of Atholl was the first named, being proposed by the King himself.

"I implore your majesty," said the alarmed Earl, when his name was mentioned, "not to put on me so invidious a duty! Think how near I am of kin to the accused! men will say, if, in my estimate of the evidence that may be brought against them, I fall not in with the severity of justice, that I favour them because of our relationship, and if I do what justice may require, and find them guilty of their imputed treasons, the opinion of the world will still go harsher against me; for by their condemnation I shall become presumptive heir to the crown."

All present applauded this speech, and seemed to expect that the King would consent to dispense with the service of the Earl at the trial; but his Majesty replied,—

"No, my Lord Atholl; what you object becomes that fame for wisdom which you enjoy in the world; but this awful business requires the assertion of an honour above the world. In

so much as you act, as you will do, with no respect for the opinions of men, but only for truth, will your name and renown be exalted and spread abroad. The task that I call on you to perform is fraught with an immensity of glory ; for there has not been, from all the eras of history, so magnificent a vindication of law and justice as that which, with the favour of Heaven, we have undertaken to see done."

The peers and prélates around the council-table were smitten with wonder at the voice and manner with which the King spoke ; and the Earl rose up, and solemnly laying his hand on his bosom, bowed in reverential silence to his Majesty, and again slowly sat down. When the King added,—

"It is our intention to preside in person, and on the throne, with crown and sceptre. The condition of the prisoners and the greatness of the occasion demand it. No man with less than the dignity royal should sit in judgment on a Prince, who has, like the Duke, administered the royal trust ; and who is there that might not be suspected of being factiously swayed against his Grace's friends and family, when it is considered that the King has declared himself the avenger of all such crimes and offences as those wherewith they are charged ; and shall moreover, by the forfeitures that may ensue from their condemnation, be so enriched with the means to reward subserviency ?"

Thus it was determined, that not only should the King preside at the trial, and the Earl of Atholl be at the head of the jury, but that the jury itself should consist chiefly of noblemen attached by interest and gratitude to the party of the prisoner ; so anxious was his Majesty that the world should never have cause to impugn the stern sublimity of his justice.

But though the Earl of Atholl had in so du-

tiful a manner submitted to the King's command before the council, his heart was much troubled; and when he retired to his lodging in the town, where his lady was, he appeared overcast with thought and care far beyond his habitude, the which had for some time before been singularly reserved and melancholyous.

"Why, my dear Lord, do you keep yourself so much of late apart from all your friends," said the Lady Atholl, "and walk in that manner, with folded arms and knotted brows, as if you nursed the remembrance of some insult or indignity?"

"Indignity!" exclaimed the Earl, as if the thing had been impossible.

"Yes," replied the Countess; "I have of late often remarked, that you require more than the usual homage from your servants, and I am afraid that you have had cause to observe some abatement in their respect towards you. Tell me, I entreat you, my dear Lord, if I have in any thing given you offence, to cause you so to withhold from me the confidence and love that we once and so long enjoyed together."

"It is impossible," replied the Earl, "that I should not be disturbed by those feuds and demonstrations of rebellion which so distract the country? Our young King lacks in the discretion which should be possessed with authority. He makes his power felt by its pressure; and bears himself onward in the establishing of laws, which, by being written, he regards as superior to the fluctuating wisdom of common opinion, without considering whether the spirit of the age goes along with him. He is like a war-ship, that sails in unknown waters, reckless of the sands and shoals that may be concealed beneath the waves, and of the sunken wrecks that lurk unseen around, prompt as it were with destiny and peril."

"I thought," said the Countess, "that you had approved of all the steps which he has taken to crush the insolence of the Albanies; and, surely, we shall have no cause to repine at whatever he may undertake against them; for by their overthrow our fortunes will be advanced."

"Peace, Margaret de Barclay," replied the Earl fretfully, "you meddle with affairs above the concerns of women.—Why should we seek the advancement of ourselves at the expense of our kinsmen?"

"Nay, Heaven forbid we should do any such thing," exclaimed the Countess; "but were the family of Albany destroyed, you would then stand next to the King."

"Do you think that I," cried the Earl, "would be art or part in any machination for their destruction? You know not what the King has done to me to-day. He has required that I should head the jury on their trials."

"In that he may have had a care for his own honour and your renown," said the Countess; "for I hope it cannot be thought that you will, either for your own advantage or any other man's affection, swerve from that integrity which has won for you so eminent a name."

The Earl made no immediate answer, but paced the chamber thoughtfully, with his hands behind.

"If," resumed the Countess, "the task he has put upon you be greater than you feel in yourself the power to accomplish, I pray you, my Lord, not to be enticed by any fantasy whatsoever to persevere in it."

"The thing itself," said the Earl, with a seeming carelessness, "would not trouble me; but who knows what the world may think?"

"Ah! my dear Lord," cried the Countess passionately, "if you did not suspect yourself, you would not so stand in awe of the world. I do,

by our long cohabitation and faithful love, implore you not to embark in this business, since it is so equivocal to your conscience."

"What do you mean? What do you imply?" exclaimed the Earl, startled by her observation.

"Oh! nothing, nothing! What should I imply derogatory to your honour?" said the Countess; and the tears rushing into her eyes, she wept very bitterly.

"I shall grow angry at such pceevishness, Margaret de Barclay," said the Earl. "You allow yourself to become fantastical; and with a prying jealousy, alike unworthy of yourself and of me, you put a false and unfavourable colouring on my best intentions. Good Heavens! you would insinuate, that I am plotting for the extinction of the whole of Duke Murdoch's line; though all the world knows, that I alone of the council opposed myself to the proceedings which have now arrived at such a portentous maturity."

"I do not blame you, my Lord," replied the afflicted lady, with a mournful voice; "but I fear that your honour is in great jeopardy. Alas! I can only pray, that it may with yourself escape the risks to which it is exposed."

The Earl made no answer to this kind ejaculation; but retired from the room, and went straight to the chamber in the castle where the King was sitting alone, pensively looking over the wide landscape that spread towards all the west; and after some interchange of courtesies becoming their respective conditions, and made flexible by their relationship and his Majesty's favour, they discoursed of the deliberations of the day and the impending solemnity of the morrow.

"I fear," said the Earl, speaking of the prisoners, "that they must all be found guilty; but *your Majesty* will not teach the irreverent world *such a dreadful lesson*, as that the sacred rank of

princes may be subjected to the ignominy of a public execution."

"If they are found guilty of the crimes laid to their charge I will confirm the sentence," replied the King gravely: "I dare not pardon them. Were I to be swayed by my inclinations in this case, and unjustly use mercy, what offender in Scotland would hereafter, in receiving punishment, be considered otherwise than as the victim of a partial tyranny?"

The Earl did not immediately make any answer; but after a short rumination, he said,—

"In those eastern countries, where wisdom and light have their fountain-head, it is said, that when ill-fated or guilty princes are condemned to die, no axe is ever stained with their blood; but at the dead of night a solemn sound is heard pealing through the silence: all then asleep start from their beds, and, listening at their windows, hear afar off the dark and heavy plunge of some awful thing cast into the sea."

The King looked austerely at his uncle, and replied, "I trust to Heaven, my Lord, that I shall ever be preserved from the practice of any usage which makes justice so much like crime. Therefore urge me no more; but let all things be done openly, and before the eyes of God and man; so that the purity of our conscience may be discerned in the clearness of our actions."

With this he went and sat down again in the oriel window where he was sitting when the Earl entered, and the latter came away somewhat discomposed by the rebuke which he had received; but seemingly not inwardly much disturbed, that his Majesty should be so resolved to let the law take its course against their delinquent kinsmen.

CHAP. XXII.

IN the meantime the Lady Sibilla, abiding with the Queen at Scoone, saw and heard, day after day, that no entreaty nor supplication could move the King from his stern intent to vindicate the laws of the realm and the regal authority; and the hope which she had cherished of obtaining, by the mediation of her royal mistress, some remission of his severity, began, in consequence, to wane and fade, and her spirit was overcast with sadness and despondency.

She, however, still thought that offended justice would be appeased with the sacrifice of one victim, and she was almost content when she heard that the Lord Walter was to be brought first to trial. She augured therefrom, that, as it was the opinion of all men he could not be tried without being condemned, the King would be satisfied with asserting the supremacy of the law over him only, in respect to those notour treasons and offences wherewith he was charged. Accordingly, for several days before the time appointed for the trial, she refrained from soliciting the Queen's favour and influence, either for her fugitive lover or for any of the prisoners; awaiting the issue under clouds of dread and terror it is true, but not so black in their darkness as to shut out every star of hope.

The singular constancy of mind with which *that delicate lady*, in the interval, resisted all *enticements to pleasure and pastime*, won the *admiration of the whole court*; for the motives

and causes of her abstinence were well known, and the ill success which had attended her endeavours, awakened commiseration and sympathy in every gentle and religious bosom. It began, however, to be remarked, that her beauty was suffering a change, and that, instead of the bloom and gayety which was wont to beam in her eye and smile on her cheek, the harsh aspect of resentment, like the shadow of a cloud on the summer fields, often lowered in sternness, and that her voice lost the sweet melody of persuasion, and became harsh with the accents, as it were, of reproach and command. In vain did the Countess of Ross, who had by this time returned to Scoone, chide her frowardness, and beseech her to retire for a season to some secluded bower, especially as she had so openly declared her determination not to go back to the castle of her father till the destiny of her betrothed lover was decided by the impending fate of his father and brothers.

But what most drew the wonder of the courtiers and the ladies, was the manner in which, amidst all her anxieties and visible sorrow, she comported herself towards the young Lord Robert Stuart, after his return from Dumbarton, whither he had gone with the King against the Lord James.

As often as he approached towards her, she was seen to shudder and become pale, but almost in the same moment, by some efforting of inward fortitude, her countenance was blithened, and she welcomed him with the apparent pleasure of one solicitous of regard.

The Queen, observing this, marvelled thereat, and also that Sibilla at no time, nor on any occasion, spoke to Stuart of the unfortunate condition of the princes of the house of Albany, but *seemed, as it were* with a singular solicitude, *to avoid all discourse and controversy of con-*

versation concerning them with him. Yet, notwithstanding, it was plain to her Majesty, as well as to others, that she did some constraint to her own nature, in the affable carriage with which she demeaned herself towards Stuart. Even Stuart himself, admiring her with the fervency of a fond and young enthusiasm, felt that there was something in her manner which, while it flattered, yielded him no delight. When he was most ardent, and emulous to evince the sentiments with which he was animated, she listened with attention, but it was as if she endured some penalty of the spirit; yet there were times when she would, as it were, wave over him the gracious enchantment of her happiest graces, and make him fancy that his affection was almost returned.

If she looked cold, and retired from his impassioned advances, he felt abashed and mortified; and, in the eclipse of hope which took place on such occasions, he remembered, with something like boding and dread, the admonition of the Spawife, with respect to the influence that a lady was to exercise over his destiny. But when she wreathed her smiles and charms, as it were, into a corded garland, wherewith he was too happy to be fettered, he pondered and dreamt but of her, and worshipped no other saint.

Many however thought, that both in the frowns and the favours by which Sibilla so subdued Stuart to become her declared knight and servitor, she was actuated by some deeper motive than the feminine desire of supremacy; and perhaps it was that she did discern qualities in his character, which she thought might prove of avail in some eventual and contingent purpose, especially as none of all the young nobles enjoyed so much of the King's familiar regard, or shared so freely in his pastimes and exercises of recreation.

But time was running on, and the day appointed for the trial being come, the Queen and her gentlewomen, in the evening, sat lovingly in unison, endeavouring, with their melodious lutes and virginals, and the pithier music of discreet discourse, to sooth Sibilla from the melancholious ruminations with which she was all that day depressed. And it came to pass, while they were so engaged in the royal chamber, that Stuart entered hastily to tell the Queen, that a messenger had arrived from Stirling with the result of the Lord Walter's trial.

In coming into the room he chanced not to observe Sibilla among the ladies ; for the setting sun so caused the purple and golden hues of the heraldries emblazoned on the windows to fall, as it were, with the sprinklings of a shivered rainbow, upon all things in the chamber, that nothing therein could be distinctly seen at the first glance ; and he began to tell, that the Lord Walter had been found guilty of the offences laid to his charge, and that he was immediately condemned to die, and had been forthwith executed on the Castle-hill, to the amazement of the people.

The sad tidings, though not more terrible than her fancy had long prepared Sibilla to expect, so smote her heart, that she uttered a feeble cry, and sunk down upon the floor in a swoon. From this sorrowful syncope she was, however, speedily recovered by the baptismalry of cold water, and the moment that she could again speak, she inquired, with a piercing sadness, what was to be done with the other prisoners.

"Alas !" said Stuart, while he hung over her, himself almost insensible with anguish and horror at the fearful accident he had caused by his rashness, "alas !" said he, "they are to be brought to trial to-morrow."

"Then they too," exclaimed Sibilla, "are no less assuredly the victims of this infernal sternness." In saying which she made a strong effort to shake off the languor of her trance: and rising from the laps and arms of the ladies, she suddenly quitted the chamber.

The Queen, whose gentle nature was greatly moved by her sorrow, followed her hastily into another room, and began to offer many kind and tender suggestions to mitigate her affliction, to all which she only said—

"I will this night go to the King himself. This work is too horrible! No measure of justice can require the sacrifice of a whole race. It is but the wrath of Heaven that demands in one sacrifice so many victims. Hitherto I have implored the beneficent mediation of your Majesty to obtain some ray of the royal mercy for these unfortunate princes, but I will now speak to the King in another strain."

The Queen was surprised at the manner in which the Lady Sibilla thus delivered herself; for there was no tone of grief in the accent of her voice, nor any shadow of sorrow on her countenance, but a serene solemnity, manifested alike in the lofty elevation of her speech, the calm of her eye, and the majestical firmness of her carriage.

"I do not oppose your resolution, sweet cousin," said her Majesty after a short pause and thoughtful interval; "but I would remind you, whether such intrepidity in behalf of the house of Albany may meet the approbation of your own friends. It is a new thing for one so young to step so forward."

"It is a new thing," replied Sibilla, "to behold an illustrious line of princes doomed to be cut off on the ignominious scaffold, and am not I involved in their fate by the strongest of all ties? by the affection that I was encouraged to

cherish,—an obligation with which Heaven itself united us. I feel as a daughter and sister of the prisoners should feel, and as such I am irresistibly impelled to stand forward in the thoroughfare of the death and desolation that are rushing in a manner so terrible upon them. My endeavours may in nothing avail the victims? but I am the only friend that dares to adventure any expedient endeavour in their behalf.”

The vehemence with which this was said affected the Queen’s heart with a sorrowful anguish, and her Majesty refrained from offering any further remonstrance, but only gave orders to the officers of her chamber to see due preparations made for the conveyance of the Lady Sibilla forthwith to Stirling, and she especially enjoined Stuart and other gallants of the court to be of her guard and company.

CHAP. XXIII.

IT was the grey morning before that mournful lady reached the Castle-hill of Stirling, where she alighted from her palfrey and ascended into the inner ward. As she passed towards the King's chambers, she met the Earl of Atholl coming from his apartment to proceed with his Majesty to the parliament-hall, where already many of the nobles and a vast multitude were assembled; and the Earl was so startled and surprised at beholding her there at that hour, leaning on the arm of Stuart, that he could make no reply when she entreated him to conduct her even then, dishevelled as she was by her nocturnal journey, to the royal presence.

"Surely," said she aloud, "it may not be thought that the Earl of Atholl is consenting to such an immolation of his kinsmen. I beseech you, my Lord, to obtain for me an audience of the King before this bloody work is renewed. It is for your own honour and good name that his Majesty should be counselled to pause. Men will say, if you do not stand forth against these terrible proceedings, that you have sordidly urged them on for your own particular advancement."

The countenance of the Earl grew dark, and he seemed as if he felt the pang of some inward sting.

"I marvel, Lady," said he, "that you so freely venture to set your feminine judgment against the King's wisdom. What his Majesty does he

has great cause to do ; and as to the opinion of men with respect to me, my oaths, my allegiance, and my duty, all alike admonish me not to heed. Does your noble father know of the advent on which you have come hither ? I doubt, Lady, if he would much approve of such unmaidenly forwardness."

"Let it stand, my Lord, between you and your conscience as to the part you perform, and I will answer to my father for mine. But as I came not hither for any controversy, I implore you to gain me admission to the King !"

"That I would do, Lady Sibilla, with a sincere heart, and be glad to second your solicitations, were there are any likelihood that your advocacy would in aught avail. But knowing how the King's resolution is rivetted with the determination to vindicate law and justice to the very uttermost, it would be a fallacious thing to carry you into his presence, and but only serve to chafe him into displeasure against us both."

To this Sibilla made no answer, but despondingly hung her head, which Stuart observing, said—

"Perchance, Lady, it will not go so hard with the prisoners to-day as it did yesterday with the Lord Walter:—abide the issue of their trial, and haply your mediation may then prove of more effect."

Sibilla looked at him for a moment with a glance of scorn and aversion, but almost in the same instant she overcame that movement of indignation, and trimming her eyes with smiles, replied—

"I have pledged myself to a task, I may indeed say that I have undertaken the performance of a vow, and until I see the King, and hear his denial with mine own ears, I shall not be satisfied that I have done all my duty."

"Duty!" exclaimed the Earl of Atholl.

"Aye, duty! you know that I am all but in name the wife of the Lord James Stuart—his father is as my father,—his brother as my brother; and until I have done my utmost to avert the calamity that has fallen upon them, I shall be accounted wanting in filial reverence and sisterly affection. Avert, did I say?—alas, that is now impossible! yesterday Lord Walter suffered. Oh, my Lord! if the King be that good and just man which he is said to be, his justice, however stern, may well be appeased by that princely victim. Therefore I again beseech you to carry me before him. Do me that small favour;—it is a suit which may be conceded to the daughter of Macdonald, for any cause and at any time. In such a cause, and at such time, it is one that she will not forego."

"I join my earnest entreaty," said Stuart, "that you will do so much to satisfy the Lady Sibilla. You see, my Lord, how her heart is bent upon it; and though her mediation prove ineffectual, yet it will be a consolatory delight to her hereafter, to think that she did all, yea more, much more, than all that could have been expected of her, to lighten the misfortunes of such dear friends. I want, indeed, words to express my admiration of the intrepidity with which so gentle a creature has engaged in so bold an enterprise."

"Not bold but merciful," exclaimed Sibilla. "I see friends in jeopardy, and shall I not strive to help them? Alas, my Lord Atholl, why do you so set yourself against me? Who will believe that the love of justice alone governs you in this matter? When the family of Albany are cut off, you become heir to the crown. Ah, my Lord, why does your complexion fly? It is so! and are you indeed working out by this cruel justice an under-ground passage to the throne?"

"She rails," said the Earl aside to his nephew, "and I have no time to listen." With which words he moved to go away, but Sibilla caught him by the skirt of his surcoat, as she exclaimed—

"You shall not leave me so abruptly, my Lord. If you have that honesty which you so well affect, the rave of my distraction will bear no offence in it. In sooth, I will take no denial. The bravery of my fathers has tempered my spirit for this undertaking, and I shall not be resisted in my resolution to see the King."

While she was thus importunately urging her suit, a stir and a noise was heard, which announced the King's approach.

First came the heralds with their batons and mantles, anon the lords of the privy chamber, then the Earl of Ross bearing the sceptre, followed by the Earl of Angus carrying the crown. His Majesty came after alone, at some distance, his train borne by two fair young pages.

As the Earl of Ross, who was uncle to Sibilla, came forward, she shrunk back for a moment; but her resolution soon overcame that hesitation of maiden diffidence, in so much that when he passed by she met the surprise with which he gazed on her as if she knew him not, or was so rapt in some high contemplation as not to be sensible to the transitory pageant then moving before her.

Her eyes were intensely fixed on the King; and as he drew near she cast herself at his feet so suddenly, that he recoiled back, and looked at her for a moment with an amaze that was very soon changed to severity. Presently, however, guessing the object she had come to solicit, his countenance saddened with pity, and he gently and graciously took her by the hands and raised her from the ground.

"My good Lord Atholl," said his Majesty,

"to your care we commit our fair cousin, and when the business of the day is done we shall then ourself confer with her;" and he would have softly passed her to the Earl, but she clung to his arm.

After dropping on his hand a few tears, she cried—

"O no! not yet! your Majesty; hear first what I would say. When your business is finished—alas! it may then be too late."

"I cannot but divine the suit you so earnestly desire to advocate," replied the King; "but, sweet Lady, it were to suppose some ill fault in a great solemnity, to say that it should be suspended for any particular solicitation or affection. I speak to you as one whose eminent qualities I do not lightly esteem; and I know that you are in this matter borne forward by no common motive. But, till the trial is over, my kingly obligations forbid me to listen to any plea of mercy."

"I did not come for mercy," exclaimed Sibilla, "but to petition your Majesty in behalf of justice, which, in this matter, stands in the imminent danger of being hereafter condemned as cruelty. I doubt not the grievous guilt of the unfortunate princes; but I would supplicate your Majesty to consider what boon shall by their death result to your loving people; for unless good shall therefrom arise there can be no justice, but only vengeance, in commanding more blood to flow than has already stained the scaffold."

The King stood in wonder to hear her speak after this manner; for, though he was well acquainted with her lofty spirit, he yet thought, from her betrothment to the outlawed Lord James, that she was come to entreat him with *feminine* importunity for mitigation and pardon.

Seeing him touched by what she had said, Sibilla continued—

“When the Earl of Lennox stands before you, I humbly supplicate your Majesty to call to mind that he is more than fourscore years old. I do not, however, ask that pity should be allowed to plead for his grey hairs. No, my gracious Sovereign, but only that you will note how plainly Heaven has by its own officer—Old Age—served the warrant by which he will soon indeed be taken to answer for all his manifold sins and treasons. That he has offended his country and your Majesty may not be doubted, but what better judge can arbitrate the sad question of his guilt than the Ancient of Days, who, with a shining hand, opens the everlasting clasps of the book of life?”

The King, moved by the tenderness of this piteous advocacy, seemed for a moment to relent from his stern sublimity; but at that juncture a solemn peal from the trumpets without recalled him to the awful sense of his regal task, and he laid his hand on his heart, and bowing his head to the suppliant, moved mournfully and slowly to the hall of judgment.

CHAP. XXIV.

THE trial lasted all day, during which the Lady Sibilla, afflicted with grief and fear, and many a fiery sting of despair, sequestered herself in an upper chamber of the castle, inaccessible to all but her maidens—whom, ever and anon, she sent to inquire how the Court was proceeding.

Sometimes she received for answer, that the witnesses prevaricated, and that it was thought the prisoners would be assolized—at others, the poor damsels returned weeping, and sat down beside her in silence, and then her heart beat audibly, and she spoke not to them till after a season had passed, when she bade them go and inquire again.

In this mournful condition the day passed, and the shades of evening began to fall, and still she had received no assurance to her hopes, nor were her fears darkened deeper than in the morning. In the gloom, however, of the twilight, a rustling was heard among the multitude, that covered in clusters all the Castle-hill, and the sound of trumpets soon after announced that the session was ended, and that the King was returning from the hall

On hearing this noise and clangour, Sibilla rose from her seat and rushed towards the door; but, in the same moment, as if she had been arrested by some invisible hand, she suddenly stopped and looked round, and gasped with horror. Her

maidens ran to her assistance—but she fluttered her hands at them, and cried, “Go, go!” They knew that she desired but to learn the issue of the trial, and they hastened out of the room, wishing that they might obtain some encouraging tidings. But they did not return.

The twilight was now fading away, and, save a deep and solemn murmuring from the waves and movements of the multitude without, Silence, clothed with the shadows of night, stole from the lonely mountains into the hamlets of the social valleys.

In the meantime, Sibilla had retired into the obscurest corner of the chamber and sat down; but, though thirsting to know the doom of the prisoners, her will was fettered as with the incubus of the nightmare, and her spirit appalled with fantasies more dismal than the unblest imaginings of a guilty conscience, and she remained as still as an alabaster effigy on a tomb.

In this woeful state, she heard a universal rustle from the multitude, as if a sudden gale had passed over the leafy boughs of a wide forest: the light of a torch from the court below then flashed against the ceiling of the room. A low and smothered noise and whispering arose, and a sound of many feet moving slowly onward. She listened—at that moment the tolling of a bell made her start from her seat—she rushed to the window—she could discern nothing distinctly, but there were torches, and soldiers, and spears glimmering, and here and there a face fearfully brightened by the glare of the torches. Yet she could see that all was moving forward, like the waters of the river’s tide in the darkness and solemnity of the night. And anon she beheld, in the gloom, a sullen and terrible form walking alone, as if eschewed by all, and his arms were bare to the shoulder, and he carried a gleaming

axe. Then came a youth of a noble air and haughty carriage, whom she soon discovered to be the Lord Alexander. He, too, was alone; and the soldiers that lined the way followed him with admiring eyes as he passed. The next that came was Duke Murdoch, leaning on the arm of Bishop Wardlaw; and they passed, and then there was a void for some time; but soon a mournful breathing of compassion was heard, and the guards fell backward, and turned aside their heads to shun the sight that was coming. Sibilla darted towards it a fearful momentary glance, and she saw an old and palsied hand, bearing a crucifix, coming tottering forward.—It was the aged Earl of Lennox, accompanied by a priest, whose arm he grasped for support, as with feeble and faltering steps he passed slowly along.

Sibilla was so melted by the sad sight, that she rung her hands, and ran into the farthest corner of the chamber and wept. And when the violence of this grief abated, she returned to the window; and opened the casement, and listened with an eager ear. All was silent—then a low murmuring rose from the multitude beyond the walls—again there was a sudden silence, and then she heard the fall of a heavy stroke. An awful moan followed, and the echoes that dwell in the abbey-craigs, and in the valley and the cliffs of Demiet, sullenly responded to the sound. Then a dreadful voice made proclamation of some terrible event, but the tenour thereof she could not hear, nor was there any response.

The bell tolled again, and again there was silence, and a second stroke fell more heavily than the first, and the dreadful voice again made proclamation.

Again the bell tolled, and then there was a rushing sound as of parting waters, in the midst of which Sibilla heard the death-axe fall a third time; but when the voice of the executioner

n again to make proclamation, a shriek so
so howling, and so full of sorrow, arose
the multitude, that she felt as if the very
sundered at the sound, and, swinging
erless from her hold, sank to the floor in a
on.

CHAP. XXV.

THE body of the Lord Walter, after his execution, had been carried to the abbey of Cambuskenneth to abide the King's pleasure ; and when the sentence of the law had been fulfilled on the other ill-fated princes, the Earl of Atholl came to his majesty to confer with him concerning them.

" Their lives," replied the King, " have satisfied justice—see therefore, I pray you, that their remains are interred as befits their rank. It is not, however, meet that persons who die attainted in their blood and dignities should be allowed the pageantries of heraldry. Let them have honourable but private burial."

" In that," replied the Earl, " your Majesty wisely anticipates the opinion of your council ; and, with permission, being myself the nearest of their kin, I will attend as chief mourner."

The King abruptly raised his left hand from the table at which he was sitting, as if he had been startled by the proposal ; but, suddenly subduing the surprise of the moment, he replied—

" No, my good uncle—that were too much, as you are now presumptive heir to the crown ; for the life of the Lord James, not only as a partner in his father and brother's treasons, but for his own rebellion in Lennox, stands doubly forfeited. For them you cannot grieve, for they *have suffered justly*,—albeit pity sued earnestly *for them*, especially for poor old Lennox.—It be-

comes not, therefore, the State, in any of its members, to seem to mourn for them. Princes in their dignity should have no respect to kin. But so far you may shew sufficient sympathy for our ill-fated cousins, by bearing yourself my command to the Abbot of Cambuskenneth, to the end that with his brethren he perform the obsequies to-night, as if he knew only of the rank, and nothing of the offence, of the deceased."

The Earl had been so overtaken by the quickness of the King's amaze at his suggestion, that he stood somewhat rebuked while his Majesty was speaking; in so much, that the King thinking his command to the Abbot of Cambuskenneth was deemed not enough to ensure a becoming pageant, added—

"The world, my Lord, can expect no more from me. I would have them interred as Christian men of noble birth, not remembering they are executed traitors; but I cannot consent that their funeral should bear the ostentation which belongs to unattainted princes."

"I beseech your Majesty," said the Earl, "to permit some other messenger to bear your orders to the Abbot; for, as in your wisdom your majesty has discerned that I should not appear in the ceremony, I hope it may stand with your pleasure to spare me also from that duty."

The King mused for the space of a minute, and then replied—

"I lay my command upon you in order to shew the Abbot how much I shall expect of his house.—But even now you would have undertaken to be chief mourner?"—

The Earl bowed, and saying, "it shall be as your Majesty desires," retired, and went forthwith to the abbey, whither the bodies had in the *meantime* been carried. And according as the

King had desired and expected, the Abbot ordered a wide grave to be prepared in front of the altar of the abbey-church, in which, at midnight, with many chants and holy requiems, the interment was performed.

At the conclusion of the solemnity, the Earl of Atholl, who had remained a spectator, left the church to return to the abbey-gate, where his horse and servants were in attendance. In passing over the tombs and graves which lay in his way, he stopped unconsciously, and looked up to the calm and cloudless moon, that in her loneliness seemed as it were the visible and embodied beauty of tranquillity and silence. But almost in the same instant a cold and skinny hand took firmly hold of his, and on hastily looking round, he beheld the charnel-house visage of the Spaewife at his shoulder.

"What think you now, my Lord Atholl?" said Anniple,—“did na I tell you, that after five burials ye would be a crowned king, and this night there has been four of them? When King James is dead ye'll wear the crown; but I wish you meikle gude o't, for ye have na pay't me yet for that grand spaeing.”

The Earl, on seeing who it was that had seized his hand so familiarly, said—

“Why, Anniple, you do not reckon well; the five funerals have all been performed,—the Regent Robert's long ago, and the four we have this night seen.”

“Ha!” exclaimed the Spaewife, “do ye keep count?”

The Earl shuddered from head to foot at the searching glance with which she thus penetrated the secret abysses of his spirit. In a moment, however, he recovered his self-possession, and the fantastical creature began to chatter her teeth, and to chuckle with expectation, holding

out her hand, saying—"But a gift, a grace, and a grant my Lord—one, two, and three."

"There, take that and begone," replied the Earl, giving her a piece of money.

"This is an almous, but no pay."

"But," said Atholl, and he looked apprehensively around, "you must tell me seriously who is to succeed King James?"

Anniple started back at the question, and raised her hand flutteringly for a moment, as if to admonish him. Suddenly, however, recollecting herself, she again held out her hand, saying—"Have na I told you, long ago and syne, that ye're to be a crowned king, and yet ye grudge to pay me for the tidings, though ye have had this night four beheaded men in their bloody winding-sheets testifying, that, as sure as death is, it's a thing that shall be."

"Thou art an importunate beggar," replied the Earl, struggling to overcome the impression which her language had produced—"and I am surprised that you get admission at such a time of night to this place."

"It's a' the house I have, Lord Atholl, since the wicked Bishop o' Dunblane gart his foul servitors rive down the bonny bower that I bigget mysel' between his kirk-yard and the wimpling burn. O, it was a blithe and a winsome place! the waters afore the door ran linking, and danc-ing, and swirling, and whirling, like blithe bairnies at their daffing. My douce baudrons lay on my lap singing cuttycrumb frae down to dark—poor thing! it had but that ae sang to pleasure me; and true Tyke was like a brother.—The deil's dame will surely some day make kail o' the monk's carcass that ruggit the roofs and rafters frae my bower, and fell't wi' a rung my kind messen for biting his leg at the herrying; for nobody thrives that does ill to Anniple of Dun-

blane. So pay your debt, my Lord, and be honest man ; or"—

“ What will you do ?

“ I'll maybe spae a' your fortune.”

The Earl flung his purse into her bosom, and hurried from the church-yard.

CHAP. XXVI.

WHILE those terrible tragedies were acting at Stirling, the Duchess of Albany was removed, as a prisoner, from her pleasant inland palace at Falkland to the strong sea-warded fortalice of Tantallon. For it was thought by all men, that her high mindedness would not patiently suffer such an entire dilapidation of her house, but would prompt her to stir up the friends of her lord and her father to attempt some enterprise of rescue or intimidation. The apprehension, however, of the machinations and treasons in which they had been engaged lay heavy on her heart; and, instead of feeling the stern instigations of revenge, her majestic spirit was weighed down with the persuasion of their guilt; and amidst its fears and mourning, did homage to justice. Still she was not bereft of all hope, but, trusting to the ties of kindred, she soothed herself with the notion that, whatever might be the issue of the trials, the King, out of respect for his own blood, would surely never suffer execution to follow. Sustained by this fond flattery, she preserved her equanimity; and even when the morning of the Lord Walter's trial came, she rose with a serene countenance, and only remained a little longer than she was wont at her orisons. Towards the evening, however, she became restless, and moved to and fro in her chamber, sometimes halting suddenly, at others *pacing the floor with wild gestures and perturbed steps*; and Leddy Glenjuckie, the only one of

her gentlewomen who had been permitted to accompany her, albeit of a loquacious humour, was so touched with dread, when she beheld these outward symptoms of the inward anguish, that she sat apart ruminating in silence.

At her accustomed hour the Duchess retired to her couch, but not to rest. She wondered that no news came from Stirling, and sometimes her wishes made her interpret this lack of tidings into an auspicious omen. In this state the solemn hours of the night passed away ; but sleep came not to her tearful eyelids. At the grey dawn she was seen slowly pacing the battlements, casting many a wistful look towards the west, and ever and anon breathing the low sigh of sadness, as she saw, afar off, the brightening summit of the mountain, at the foot of which stood the towers of Falkland, that home which had been blithened by the innocence of her children, and which with them she was destined never to behold again.

All day she was, by fits, touched as it were with frenzy ; still, in the midst of those fearful pangs, the fortitude of her spirit never departed ; and when the tear was shed and the shock over, she appeared as august and serene, as if neither the alarms of a daughter, a wife, nor a mother, had any dominion within her bosom. And she sat at the window of her chamber in the western tower, and beheld the sun set and the evening close, and the stars lighted up, and the moon arise, calmly awaiting the consummation of her fate. But still no messenger came ; and still the hope that wrestled with her, and would fly away, she continued to detain with a fond and endearing struggle. At last, soon after midnight, the sound of the bugle-horn was heard at the gate. It made her start from her seat, with the intent of rushing to the warder's tower, to hear who at that time sought admission ; but, ere she

had half way passed across the floor, she checked her precipitation, and, returning sedately to her seat, desired her gentlewoman to order candles to be brought in ; for till that occurrence, she had all the evening remained without any other light than the moonbeams through the casement.

Scarcely had the menial in attendance placed the lights on the table, when the captain of the castle entered, and said that a herald had arrived from Stirling, and demanded admission. The captain, though an austere old sworder, faltered as he delivered the message, and avoided her eyes.—

“ Give him admittance ; I have longed for his coming,” exclaimed the Duchess rising hastily. “ Let him come in—let him come in—whatever his tidings or his office may be.”

The captain turned quickly round, and hastened out of the room. Her gentlewoman, who had observed his emotion, retired to a corner and sat down ; but the Duchess continued standing.

After a brief interval the captain returned with the herald, who trembled exceedingly as he approached towards her with a letter in his hand. She saw the paper, and snatched it eagerly from him ; but instantler the fortitude of her spirit recovered its firmness, and without breaking the seal she walked deliberately to the candle.

The herald who had knelt down to present the letter at the moment when she took it from him, continued on the floor, and seemed wrapt with amazement when he beheld her open it, and peruse it with trepidation.

“ It is all over now,” said the Duchess, when she had read the fatal intelligence ; “ they have all suffered the sentence of the law.” A slight flutter moved her kerchief as she said these words ; but she laid the letter on the table, and turning to the herald, who had risen from his

kneeling, she added with a struggling voice, "If they deserved to die, their doom was just. Sir, have you any other business here?"

The herald was unable to make any reply, but bowed, as one that is before the hallowed shrine of some glorious martyr, and retired, followed by the captain; who seemed in haste to quit the room; but, before leaving it, he turned, and for a moment looked at Her Grace with scarcely less than religious reverence, and then hurried away.

The Duchess, till they were gone, moved not from the spot where she was standing near the table; but when the door was shut, and none present but her gentlewoman, she raised her hands distractedly, and with the wildest note of desolate misery cried—"God help me!" and rushed into an inner room.

CHAP. XXVII.

It came to pass, some time after the dolorous events, whereof recital has been made, that the King summoned the States of the realm to Parliament at Perth, and thither repaired Sir Robert Græme, the fiercest adherent of the faction of the house of Albany. He grudged the frustration of his design for the deliverance of the Lord Walter from the Bass isle, as if it had been to himself an insolent taunt, or a galling injury; and his dread of the King's justice was as a spur to his revenge, in so much that he pondered by night and by day in what manner to ratify a resentment that blood only could quench. Yet, though thus borne onward to crime by the incitements of destiny, he was nevertheless deterred from immediate vengeance by considerations of interest; for even in his wildest and worst passions, this remorseless conspirator ever had respect to his estate. It is true, that the trials and execution of the princes smote him with amazement, but it soon passed away, and like the violent flame that bursts forth after the brief damping of oil cast upon the fire, the fiend which possessed him raged fiercer than ever.

At Perth he met with many of the baronage, malcontent with the strict enforcement of the royal authority, which hampered them in their feuds and forays, and their other hasty administrations of redress in their own specialities; and finding them in this mood, he began afax off to *work upon their distempered minds.*

“ This method of rule,” he was wont to say, “ which King James has learnt from our old enemies the English—may not, in itself, I am free to acknowledge, be wrong ; nay, I doubt not it accords passing well with the humour of those for whom it was contrived—for with them charters and statutes have the authority of rights and justice—but it suits neither our usages nor the temperament of Scottish blood. The English, at any time, will rather seek another’s help than serve themselves ; and hence it is that they so tamely leave their wrongs to the adjudications of judges and juries. But it is the nature of every free and true-born Scot to do his own business ; and accordingly, from the oldest times of the monarchy, our Kings have never had leave to meddle with the jurisdictions of the chiefs and barons. In verity, I should be glad to know how a travelling man of law, going from town to town, with a book under his arm like a pedlar, can see into the deservings of ill-doers so well as the Lord that lives among them, and knows their habit, and is familiar with their repute. By such jurisprudence, I grant that the act of wrong may be well enough sifted, but is it justice that the doer thereof should only be punished for that particular act, however bad his forgone conduct may have been ? For my part, I think the King’s prerogative should be upheld in all things, but I do not discern why it is that he has been so ill-advised as to treat his nobles as if they were all alike, and take from us the sword, even in our own defences. When he may go to war with the English, or any other crown, shall we say to him he should not ? and are not our chiefs and barons, with respect to one another, as free to act as Kings, who are but barons with a greater vassalage ? However, not to speak of that which may be wrongously repeated to our prejudice, who can tell what will ensue by this new way of

taking subsidies. I do not say that King James hath any ill intent in enriching his treasury by taxes ; but if a King have money enough to keep sworders, independent of the service of his vassals, what man, of any degree, can then brag of freedom, or call aught his own, whether the thing be life, limb, or land ?”

By subtle discourses of this bearing, he so beguiled them to his will, that, in the end, they appointed him to remonstrate with the King against the inroads that were daily made on their ancient privileges.

“ I shall not shrink in the task,” said he ; “ but then you must be prepared to back my endeavour ; for, I doubt not, the King will ill brook the representation, and we all know, if he call it treason, it is but another word for death. Now I am not a man that will be worried like a rabbit. I will stand to danger whatever it may be, and I care not what life may perish in defending my own. It is, therefore, needful to be prepared for the worst, and I should remind you, that the Earl of Atholl, who has been always heart and hand with the King in this new-fangled governance, can never be a fit person to name for the Regency, should our adventure come to that extremity.”

Thus all things were duly concerted for executing, at the opening of Parliament, what had been in this manner determined ; but, when the King appeared on the throne, Græme, transported with a sudden sting of ire and malevolence, forgot the policy he was pledged to follow, and, rushing upon his Majesty, cried aloud—

“ I arrest you, Sir, in the name of the Three Estates of the realm here assembled ; for as your people have sworn to obey you, so are you constrained, by an equal oath, to govern them according to their laws and customs.” And in saying this, still grasping the King’s arm, he

turned round and said to the barons and prelates there present, "Is it not thus as I say?" But even those of his own faction were so struck with consternation at his rashness, and so awed by the serenity which the King preserved, that they had not heart to give him any demonstration of encouragement.

"Take him to prison," said his Majesty calmly; and he was thereupon seized by the arms, and carried away, bitterly upbraiding the dastards for whom he had adventured so daringly. The business of the Session then proceeded, as if no such bold treason had been attempted; and, when it was ended, his Majesty having retired to his closet, sent for the Earl of Atholl to confer with him concerning the outrage.

"I can discover," said his Majesty when the Earl was come before him, "that the austerity of our impartial administration has galled many among you, else this audacious Sir Robert Græme would not have ventured to lay hands on the King in Parliament. Now, as the end of all government should be to cherish good-will among the subjects, there must be some lack of policy, if not of justice, in the rigour of our proceedings; therefore let us speedily redress the grievance. I will pardon Græme—for by the bravery of his attempt, he matched himself, as it were, only with me, and since he was none seconded, I shall not let it be searched whether or no he had any abettors."

"It may perhaps be as your Majesty says; but an outrage so flagrant is beyond pardon. If, however, the mercifulness of your own gracious nature plead for him, surely it will be enough to let him have his life. The very least that can be meted to him is banishment, and the forfeiture of his estates."

"To so bold and bad a man as I have heard even you, my Lord, describe Sir Robert Græme,

such a punishment would only be as a license and warrant to work mischief.—”

“It may be,” replied the Earl, “that I have spoken of him in heat, for he has ever been the most turbulent of the Albany faction. But however that may have been, it is not to be thought, even though your Majesty be content to pardon the insulting treason done to yourself, that the States will overlook the breach of their own privileges.”

The King remained for several minutes ruminating and silent, and then said—

“This affair troubles me. I cannot altogether pardon Græme without giving offence to many of the nobility; and yet he is a man of such a nature, or I mistake the indications of his character, that any measure of punishment, however small, will become with him a motive for vengeance. I would either deal with him gently, or not spare him at all.”

“If,” replied the Earl, “such be your Majesty’s sentiment, and you are not moved in the business by any consideration of your own, but only as the matter may affect the public weal, let the lesser punishment be tried. For whatever impression it may make on Græme himself, your royal clemency cannot fail to prove most salutary upon others. As I doubt not there are abettors of his treason, who at this moment tremble for themselves, they will be glad to find their heads safe by the leniency shown to him. Were he entirely pardoned, they would suspect it was done but to gain time till their whole plot was found out.”

“There is something like reason in what you say, my Lord, and I will remit the matter into your hands; and yet, I know not how it is, but I am not satisfied in compromising any point of *policy* with such a daring offender as Sir Robert Græme.” And, so saying, his Majesty retired

to his chamber; and the Earl coming away through the cloister, met Bishop Wardlaw, to whom he rehearsed what had passed between him and the King, knowing that his Majesty would probably, of his own accord, tell him.

"I do almost lament," said the Bishop, "that your counsel in this case has prevailed; and yet I would not have the traitor pardoned, for I know him well. I know him by a confession which he once made to me while he was yet a mere youth scarcely bearded. Confession did I call it? A bragbery rather of crimes. The subtle adder has not more skill in finding venom to supply the malice of her bite, than that dreadful man in discovering fit means and instruments for his atrocious purposes."

The Earl made no answer to this, but seemed so thoughtful, that the religious prelate, recollecting his consanguinity to Græme, endeavoured to soften the harsh opinion which he had thus indignantly delivered.

"You are mistaken, my Lord Bishop," said the Earl, "I am not troubled by what you have told me; but I dread to think that a spirit so implacable should be set at large, goaded with the sense of punishment."

"It is not too late to have him brought to trial and condemned," said the Bishop.

The Earl gave a short shudder of revolt, as it were, at this, but in a moment he replied sedately—

"Though I know Græme to be the most daring and dangerous man at this time within the realm of Scotland, yet it cannot stand with the King's honour to change in his purpose towards him. Banishment and the forfeiture of his goods is the sentence that will be executed."

"In advising that," said Bishop Wardlaw, "you have incurred a fearful responsibility."

To this the Earl made no answer ; and the Bishop, discerning that what he had said caused displeasure, parted from him. Next day, when the States again assembled in Parliament, sentence was recorded against Græme as the Earl of Atholl had suggested ; but, instead of going into banishment, he was no sooner set free of custody than he retired into the wildest highlands, and gave himself up to wrath and revenge.

CHAP. XXVIII.

ONE evening, soon after the daring adventure of the traitor Græme, as the King was sitting alone in his closet, pondering of his royal trusts and the odure that his name might have with posterity, he called Sir William Chrichton, the chancellor, before him—a man richly endowed with wisdom,—grave, temperate, and yet withal of an urbane disposition, and said to him—

“There is a mission of charity, Sir William Chrichton, in which I would fain have the help of your good offices. The forlorn estate of that noble lady, the Duchess of Albany, is a thing that lies very sore upon me. Whatever were the faults and offences of her father, her husband, and her sons, verily she has had cause for great sorrow ; and though Justice might not mitigate the misfortunes that she hath borne, yet pity will constrain us to lighten to the utmost the grief wherein she sits so disconsolate. I pray you, therefore, Sir William, go to her, and not only set her free from Tantallon, but undertake from me to restore to her whatever she may desire of the lands and heritage of her family. I give all to your wisdom and discretion, to act and to do for me as you would wish to see done by one who would earn, without the abatement of any present duty, the guerdon of an honourable renown hereafter.”

Sir William Chrichton did not make any immediate response to this command, but remained

thoughtful for some time ; in so much, that the King added—

“ I am grieved, Sir William, that you take time to consider of this compassionate matter. You do not think, in wishing to soften the rigorous adversity that afflicts the Duchess, I thereby manifest aught which the invidious world might, in its malice or envy, impute to me as an acknowledgment of having done wrong?”

“ No,” replied the Chancellor ; “ far be from me the thought that your Majesty can be swayed in any good, or just, or kind intent, by the awe of those who look invidiously, even on the virtues of princes. But after the terrible task of justice which your Majesty has achieved, it is meet to be considered, whether the time for remission and indulgence be yet come. The Duchess of Albany is a lady famed for an august spirit and a masculine understanding ; fit, it is said, for the rule and sovereignty of a kingdom. What has befallen her family cannot but have struck sharply and sorely into her heart ; and of a necessity it would seem she must bear against your Majesty an ireful and implacable mind ; for it is the very nature of ill fortune, to stir up these evil qualities in ourselves, which, but for adversity might have slept unknown, like the foul toad that lurks under the flower, and is not angered till the mower’s scythe hath wounded his back. Moreover, your Majesty would do well to call to mind, that her outlawed son, the Lord James, still lives and threatens. What he might do were his mother reinstated even in no more than the earldom of her father, is a thing that requires the wisdom of all the council to consider ; for what may be given to her will be given to him ; and in him the enemy has been but disarmed,—his animosities burn as fiercely as ever,—and it were well to weigh the consequence of restoring to him any portion of his

arms, even though it were no more than his dirk."

"I have thought of all that, Sir William ; but we shall have done little for the peace of the realm, if we cannot venture to pity and relieve the sufferings of a poor widow. Truly, Sir William, it stands not with my honour, if, after such sacrifices, we may not do as we list in those humanities which all men must approve. No: the safety of the state shall be maintained without respect to what may be done to lighten the condition of the Duchess of Albany. I do therefore again say, that you will do me a kind service by undertaking this mission."

Sir William seeing the King so bent, and having noted withal the greatness of his motives in whatsoever he minded to do, made no farther controversy, but retired, and went forthwith to Tantallon. And when he was come thither, he was conducted to the chamber of the Duchess, who was much moved when she beheld him ; but, without expressing any sentiment of the surprise wherewith she was agitated, she waved her hand, and pointing to a chair, invited him to be seated.

After the lapse of a short time, in which Sir William remained as if he had expected that she would inquire the object of his visit, he began to speak of the joyfulness with which he had received the King's commands, to assure Her Grace of the good will that his Majesty bore towards her, and that he had already delivered his orders to the Constable to allow her to quit the castle.

"And whither shall I go ?—who will venture to shelter one who is the daughter, the widow, and the mother of traitors ? Alas ! Sir William Chrichton, you have brought me no boon."

"But I am empowered to restore to you all

the lands of Lennox that pertained to the Earl, your father."

"My father! oh, what have you done to that poor infirm old man?"

"I am farther authorised to say, that all the dignities and titles of honour, which you have derived from the Duke, your husband, shall be continued to you as heretofore."

"What! the titles! the style—as Duchess of Albany—as Duke Murdoch's wife?"

"Every thing, to the utmost pretext of heraldry."

The Duchess, as he said this, smiled; but with so much of sadness in her look, that the Chancellor was rebuked.

"Dignities and titles, Sir William," exclaimed the Duchess, "to the utmost pretext of heraldry! Verily the King is royally munificent. He will give me the titles I had with the Duke! Wife was one of them—will he restore that? Mother! I was that too, Sir William Chrichton! Where is my princely Walter, and my warm free-hearted Alexander?"

"Alas!" cried the Chancellor, "that I should have so marred the King's kindness."

"The King's kindness," cried the Duchess with a withering look! "Oh! who could utter such a word to me? My old grey-headed father, my husband, my sons,—where are they all? The King's kindness—Oh, Sir William Chrichton! when first I but tried to call that kindness by the name of justice, the mingled feelings of the daughter, wife, and mother, revolted at the endeavour."

For some time the Chancellor stood appalled, and pierced to the heart; but, when the vehemence of her grief had somewhat abated, he again protested his sorrow for having so unwittingly touched her wounds, and then he began to speak of the business on which he had come,

soliciting to know what answer he should bear to the King.

“Tell him that, when you offered me the lands of Lennox, I wept for my father;—when you promised me the restoration of the dignities that belonged to me as a wife, I asked for my husband;—and when you told me of his kindness.—Kindness! oh, where are all my children? Kindness! Herod in his jealousy slew but peevish infants—mine were princely men. When the angry Heavens punished guilty Egypt, only the first-born were slain, and daughters and mothers there, had fathers and husbands left to share their sorrow; but all are taken from me!—I think, Sir William Chrichton, that I could have willingly parted with one to have redeemed the others; but oh! to take them all!—with one stroke to fell all my flourishing grove!—the merciless thunderbolt is satisfied with a single tree! But surely I am made of some insensative element, that I survive such desolation, and hear of kindness. Niobe, that lost but her children, wept herself to stone!—O! Murdoch, Murdoch! had I been that true wife which I was once accounted, I should have gone with thee to prison. No chiding for those fond errors, which have proved the ruin of our gallant boys, would then have escaped my lips. But I would have taken thy head upon my lap, and soothed thee to sleep, and shed no tear, neither for son nor father, till that was done. Methinks it would have been a far easier endurance than what I now suffer, to have listened to the knelling of their fatal bell, and to have gone with them to the scaffold, and seen the dreadful preparations!—for then, as the first axe lightened in the air, surely sweet death would have closed my eyes, and I should never have heard it fall.”

Sir William Chrichton, who had for some time struggled to suppress the anguish of sym-

by which he felt for her measureless sorrow, could no longer withstand these woeful lamentations, but hastily quitting the room, left the casement without completing the task of his mission.

CHAP. XXIX.

In the meantime, Bishop Finlay, who had fled with the Lord James to Carrickfergus in Ireland, having been seized with a sore malady, departed this life; and the young Lord had, after his obsequies, passed over the sea to the castle of the Macdonald in Skye, to seek the aid of his help and means against their common enemy the King; for so they both wrothfully accounted his Majesty.—The Lord James, because of the dreadful devastation which his austere justice had brought upon his father's house, and Macdonald, not only as an adherent of the faction of the Albanies, but for the prejudice which his daughter, the Lady Sibilla, had suffered in the frustration of her betrothment.

The Lord James, on reaching the shores of Skye, was informed, by certain persons who had come from the mainland, that Macdonald was then at Inverlochy with his kith, kin, and allies, having returned thither from an expedition which he had taken to avenge the fate of his old friend, Duke Murdoch. In which inroad, finding himself none succoured by those on whose swords he had reckoned, for they were of the party for whom Sir Robert Græme had so unprofitably made himself spokesman, he was fain to profess contrition to the King for his rashness, in order that he might be clemently permitted, as he in the end was, to return scaithless home.

On hearing these tidings, the Lord James forthwith ordered the bark wherein he had come

from Ireland to make for Inverlochy, where he was welcomed by the Macdonald, as if the rites and benediction of holy church had made him indeed his son-in-law. Nor was it long till they had concerted a new enterprise; to the which the Lord of the Isles was the more easy incited, by the assurances which he received from his guest, that the mutations of fortune had none changed the sincerity of the love and devotion which he had professed for the Lady Sibilla.

"Could we," said the Lord James, "but drive this tyrant King back to England; I doubt not the estates of the realm would speedily reverse my attainder, and restore me to the rights and rank of my family. Then should I prove before the world with what unimpaired affection I am in heart wedded to Sibilla; or if we meet in battle, and he be slain or taken, shall I not be king, and Sibilla share with me the dignity royal?"

These sanguine anticipations of youthful adventure, together with his own sense of baffled enterprise, and the native turbulence of his temper, so worked upon Macdonald, that next morning he marched with his clansmen, accompanied by the Lord James, for Inverness; where, no later than the third day after having received the King's clement permission to return home unmolested, he arrived, and where, to shew how resolute he was to set at naught the royal authority, the first thing he did was to burn the town and lay siege to the castle.

Now it had so chanced, that the Lady Sibilla, by the exhortations of her aunt, the discreet Countess of Ross, with the sisterly solicitations of her royal mistress, about this time came back to the court, and was then abiding with the Queen in the Abbey of Holyrood at Edinburgh, *where, in the judgment of all the gallants, her beauty, albeit faded in its virgin bloom, had re-*

ceived new lustre by the virtue of her endeavouring to avert the doom of the ill-fated princes.—To no eye did it shine so bright and fair as to that of Stuart, who was become her openly professed lover—seconded in his suit by the gentle recommendations both of the King and Queen, and by many a laudatory advertisement of his worth and knighthood from the Countess of Ross, who was won to favour him by the courtesies which he administered, as it were with the left hand, to the weak side of her vanities.

Sibilla, however, heeded not the fond admiration with which she was followed, but abandoned herself to bitter ruminations on the disappointment of her early affection, and the ruined fortunes of her first lover. For though she shunned not the pastimes of the court, yet was her spirit, amidst the most joyful revels, ever far away; and her eyes wandered with a cold and aimless restlessness, that often touched the observer with the sympathy of a melancholy wonder and sorrow. She had plainly no pleasure in any kind of companionship; but, as often as she could pass forth unheeded, she chose her solitary walks among the lonely places of the neighbouring mountains; sitting sometimes on the perilous brink of the precipices, like the white sea-bird that perches on the ocean cliffs, at others hovering in the still of the evening twilight amidst the shadows and lowering rocks that overhang the chapel of St. Anthony.

It came to pass one morning, as she went forth from the Abbey to indulge her mournful cogitations in that manner in the King's Park, that she saw Anniple of Dunblane standing at a little distance on the green sward, resting her hands on the top of the rough sapling, which, though a burden, she had long used as a staff.—*She was leaning forward, and her eyes were cast*

down, earnestly commercing with something that she contemplated on the ground.

"Good morrow, Anniple," said the pale and pensive Sibilla; "what seest thou on the grass to make thee read it so earnestly?"

The Spaewife, without raising her eyes, gave a quick and impatient intimation with her hand, that she did not wish to be disturbed.

"I would give a merk for thy fancies," said the lady.

Anniple, without making any reply, or changing her position, held out her hand to accept the gift.

"Nay, that may not be—no work, no wage, Anniple—and if you will not tell me, I shall at once say again, good morrow."

The fantastical creature still made no reply; but, looking up, she beckoned with her finger to the Lady Sibilla to draw near. She then pointed to the ground, and said—

"See ye that, Lady Sibilla?—see ye that there?"

"I see nothing, Anniple, but a beetle crawling."

"It's a klok-leddy in her scarlet cardinal."

"What then?"

"Is't no a sinful injustice, Sibilla Macdonald, that the hand o' Heaven should have ta'en such pains to mak and adorn that loathsome thing, and let the fairies make the like of me out o' a ben-weed, that the very kine have more sense than to taste?"

"All things," replied Sibilla, "are by permission of Heaven, and done in wisdom and with justice."

Anniple eyed her askance with a bright and piercing look, and then said, in a deep and sarcastic accent,—

"Wha did the wrang that ye yearn to revenge, and gave leave for the dule that ye dree?"—

And she added, laughingly, "and so ye thought I was marvelling at the red mantle o' the leddy-launners?—but grubs and worms are nae marvels to me, ever since I sleepit, the night of the four burials, in the old Leddy o' Limmerton's coffin in Cambuskenneth kirk-yard:—She was buriel wi' her wedding-ring, and the betherel howkit her up to take it off. I saw frae ahint a headstane what the loon was doing; and when he was whitling wi' her finger, I gaed such a skraike like a howlit, that it gar't him take leg-bail. See, there's the ring on my ain mid-finger, wi' a garnet stane like a blob o' blood. When the betherel ran away I herryt the corpse mysel', and harl't it out by the leg and the winding-sheet, and lay cosily down in the coffin till the morning.—Eh! What a fright, I trow, Father Andrews got, when he saw me sleeping there, and the poor auld Leddy o' Limmerton lying in her dead-claes on the grass; but I wish ne'er to dream as I did that night; for I dreamt I was dead, and buried in a tomb; and that cloks and worms were crawling and coiling o'er my heart and aneath my back—

And a black toad—he sat on my chin,
Watching my month, that he might loup in."

Sibilla shuddered, and moved to go away; but Anniple took hold of her mantle, and said—"But I have na told you what I was looking at."

"What was it?" inquired Sibilla, pale and apprehensive of some still more hideous rehearsal.

"I saw Lord Atholl," replied Anniple, "as I came through the park yestreen, on this spot; and just now, when I was coming by again, I had a glimmering glimpse of his likeness on the grass, with the look of one that would do ill, yet

was afraid. I hae a thought he would fain be King."

"You speak maliciously, Anniple," said Sibilla, at once surprised and struck with the remark. "Go to, else you may have cause to repent such slander; the Earl of Atholl is an honest man, albeit no friend nor favourite with me."

"When the King dies, he'll be crown't for a' that."

"Duke Murdoch's son, the Lord James, though under the ban of outlawry and forfeiture, is nearer to the throne," replied Sibilla seriously, forgetting, in the emotion of the moment, the irrational character of the Spaewife.

"Near or far off," said Anniple, "it's his doom, and I'll say no more. But what need I care—nae good will come o't to me. I would I could forget the looks o' him as I saw him here. Maybe it was the de'il in his likeness, come to molest me.—Do ye ken, Sibilla Macdonald, that I ne'er forgather with Lord Atholl himself, but some dule or damage ever befalls me. I wish ye would put your hand to the work, and help to shove him out o' the world—and ye should too, for he's a cross in your own fortune."

"How! what do you mean?" cried Sibilla, shaken with a strange horror.

"That ye're no to be married while he's to the fore."

"Why do you think so?" replied Sibilla, recovering her wonted self-possession, adverting, at the same time, in her mind to the assiduous suit of the Earl's nephew, the young Lord Stuart. Anniple, however, made no answer; but looking shrewdly from the corner of her eye, and with her head bent aside, sang—

*"Fair Magdalene sat at the window high,
And she looked far o'er the sea;*

And she saw a bark frae a foreign land
Coming sailing merrilie.
It is, it is my own true knight,
And he comes from Palestine,
So hie you hence, Sir Reginald,
For I'll never now be thine."

She then hastened away, and Sibilla, instead of pursuing her wonted walk towards the cliffs of Arthur's Seat, went back to the Abbey, where she was not long entered, when messengers from divers parts of the north came with accounts to the King of the sudden rebellion of the Lord of the Isles, her father, the destruction of Inverness by his clansmen, and the rumour of the Lord James being with him from Ireland. The latter occurrence seemed to her very wonderfully predicated in the rude strain with which the Spaewife had parted from her in the park.

CHAP. XXX.

WHEN the king heard how Macdonald, after having accepted his grace and permission to return home, had so soon of a sudden come back with his clansmen, and done such damage and molestation to the town of Inverness, he was exceedingly wroth, and not only called on his armourer to equip him for battle, but issued his royal mandate and order for all the knights and gallants of the court to prepare with horse and panoply to accompany him to the field. For in the wisdom of that noble prince, speed was esteemed the better part of the equipage of war ; and it was ever his declared opinion, that only ill could come of the evil of delay, from whatsoever considerations it might be pretermitted to arise.

In the first alacrity, with which his royal commands were received by the youthful warriors of the Scottish court, none seemingly obeyed them with a more joyful intrepidity than did the Lord Robert Stuart, who, in the ardour of his loyalty, and the thirst of valiant deeds where-with the tidings had inspired him, forgot that the bold rebel he was summoned to quell was no other than the father of his beloved Sibilla. And thus it happened, when at the accustomed hour that young and unfortunate lady went to give her wonted tendence on the Queen, that she met him in the gallery proudly harnessed for war, and gay with the generous arrogance of youthful *soldiership* eager for adventure.

On first seeing him, she was none difficulted to discern for what purpose he was armed ; but, with a firm step and a lofty air, she proceeded along the gallery as if she noted him not ; her heart however swelled, and throbbed as if it had been wounded with many arrows, whose barbs of agony were yet quivering in its core.

Her proud demeanour, and the fixed unrecognising eye with which she passed him, soon instructed Stuart of his error, and he perceived that she resented the readiness with which he had put on his armour to march with the King against her father. For a moment he was awed by her majestic look, and troubled with the thought of her own haste, and he would fain have retired from her presence, could he have believed, as she affected, that he was indeed unobserved. But before she had half-way passed up the room, he recovered from his surprise, and ran quickly after her. The rattling of his mail and sword was too audible not to strike her ear in such a manner as to cause her to look back. In the act of so doing, he caught her by the hand, and with a gentle violence held her on the spot.

" I would speak with you, Lady," said he ; " I implore you to listen but for a moment."

" Is it to tell me, after your manifold protestations of affection," replied Sibilla, " that you are prepared to slay my unfortunate father ?"

Stuart dropped her hand, and recoiled to some distance : he looked at her with amazement tinged with contrition ; and he beheld her lip curl with scorn, and her eyes lighten with indignation.

" I have never, Lady," said he humbly, " had any reason to esteem my protestations acceptable."

" Oh ! then, it is because you have not yet been acknowledged as an accepted suitor, that

you have thus so very alertly put yourself in steel. Truly, my Lord, you give me good reason to persevere in the maiden diffidence that so much ardour in your protestations compelled me to assume, since it would seem you accounted me so easily to be won that you had only to profess love to be accepted. I have ever been taught, that the test of affection was self-denial; but that, no doubt, was in the olden time, when ladies had no cause to question the truth and fealty of their knights."

"The King, Lady Sibilla," replied Stuart, advancing towards her, "has ordered all his friends now in Edinburgh to be ready to advance with him to the north. I deplore the service he has called me to, but loyalty and knighthood claim my attendance."

"And justly," said Sibilla; "it would be a strange thing if you should not be found by the King's side in danger. The Earl of Atholl is now too old a man to endure the hardships of the field, else, as present heir to the crown, he should be at his Majesty's right hand,—but you are next to him, being heir to the Earl, and the evil-tongued world might think, were you not to be with the King, that some sinister affection towards the succession governed your loyalty."

"I never thought of such opinions," replied Stuart; "I was commanded, and I obeyed; and glad I am, Lady Sibilla, in having done so, as it must prove to you, as well as to all men, that my loyalty is not blemished by any sordid respect for my own particular advantage; but I grieve almost to weeping, that the service I am called to is against your father."

"Verily, it is indeed, my Lord," said the lady, "a strange way to thrive in your wooing with a daughter, to go to war so gallantly against her father."

"If you will but say that you wish I should

not go, I will brave the King's displeasure, and even the contumelious opinion of the world, by remaining with you."

"Lord Robert Stuart!" exclaimed Sibilla haughtily, "let me end this vain importunity. I was, I am betrothed to the Lord James, your cousin ;—when he was but third son to the Duke his father, and his two princely brothers stood between him and all chance of succeeding to the throne, I was allured even then, by the ambition of my own heart, to entertain his suit with a willing affection. Think you that now, when he is with my father, and next of kin to the crown, and the chance of being king hanging on the event of a battle, that I will hearken to the protestations of any meaner lover?"

Stuart stepped back a pace, astonished at so unmaidenly a speech, and for a moment thought her peerless beauty overcast with a sullen cloud, the shadow whereof fell upon his heart with a cold and ungenial darkness. She looked at him, and, as if she repented of being so harsh, she softened her accents, and added—

"But, my Lord, this surely is no time to urge any protestation with me? I cannot but know that the King's power is greater than my father's, and fear that I am destined to endure for him a keener sorrow than I have even suffered for the unfortunate family of Albany. Nor can I conceal from myself, that perhaps my own fate is involved with my father's—what the king will do, if by the chance of war he is thrown into his hands, requires no seer to foretell; and then shall I abide here, in the hateful servitude of honouring the destroyer of my father and so many friends."

"Heavens! Lady," cried Stuart, "what dreadful task would you lay upon me?"

"On you, my Lord, I would lay none ;—what are you to me? It is true, a professed lover,

but in that respect you boast no better claim to a return, than the basest hind that might dare to affect a similar passion."

"Would it please you then, were I to ask the King's leave to stay behind?"

"You have urged as much before;—can you doubt that I do not desire the ruin of my father?"

"But if he succeed in his rebellion, what may ensue?"

"That may not be answered,—but the Lord James it is said is with him, and doubtless he counts, at least in the event of success, on our union. What other advantage may ensue it were not wise of me even to imagine."

Stuart cast down his eyes, and touched his forehead with his hand thoughtfully. Sibilla looked at him with a watchful and inquisitorial eye, and then said—

"I beseech you to bear in mind that I am a daughter, trembling for the fate of my father, and in no condition to speak with temperance of the dangers that impend over him. I think but of my father—all other cares and thoughts, however dear, are locked up in my heart, and shall have no license to mingle with my feelings, till he is safe."

At these words she burst into tears, and cried passionately aloud, "I shall not outlive another tragedy on the hill of Stirling."

While they were thus vehemently discoursing, the King himself came into the gallery, and seeing them together, stepped eagerly towards them; but Sibilla, hearing steps approaching, looked quickly round, and on seeing his Majesty, gathered up her robe abruptly, and darted away.

CHAP. XXXI.

WHEN the King saw that the Lady Sibilla desired to avoid his presence, he abated his speed, and walked leisurely towards Stuart, who at the same time advanced to meet him.

"I should," said his Majesty, in a grave but jocular manner, "have laid my interdict at this time on our fair and eloquent cousin; for I doubt not, that, if she is permitted to be at large among our friends, she will achieve as good as a victory for her father before we march. But, Stuart, as I doubt not some such event was the endeavour of her discourse with you, I shall not repine, if, on conditions, you submit to abide her prisoner."

"I have now no hope," replied Stuart, "that she will ever consent to be mine."

"How!" said the King; "what new thing has come to pass, to make you think so?"

"It is not in my power to show by any act or deed, that my proffered affection is of that purity which the cruelty of ladies in these times requires to be avouched by proof and sacrifice. The time was, as I have heard say, that ladies were to be won by the gentle sympathy of heaven-inspired love, but the Lady Sibilla would inflict tests."

"Let her have none, cousin," replied the King; "for if she be such a bargainer, beshrew me if she is worth the having. But truly, of late she hath been an altered creature in her demeanour, and no more like the gay and blooming rose

she once was, than the root is like the flower." And his Majesty added, with a slight inflection of sadness in his voice, "yet I do not wonder at the change, but I had hoped by this time that your lowly servitude would have earned some little grace at her hands. To what tests would she subject you?"

"Such as honour and knighthood will not permit; she would have me to forego the duties of my loyalty and allegiance."

"I thought so—and verily, it is but an uncivil way of thriving in a lady's love to fight with her father. However, Stuart, as I have said, if by remaining here you may hope to prosper in your suit, I give you free leave."

"By that your Majesty augments the strength of the motive which obliges me to go. If I felt that I could not, without a sacrifice of honour and a blemish to knighthood, remain behind, how can I do so, when to the claims of allegiance, honour, propinquity, and knighthood, your Majesty adds the stronger tie of gratitude for such a gracious disposition to advance my happiness?"

"I see not the matter in that light," replied the King, as if he pondered with himself. "I alone have a right to your service—and if I stand with my pleasure and convenience to say you shall abide here, I see not what cause either honour, knighthood, propinquity, or royalty, have to remonstrate against your obedience to the command."

"It is rumoured, that the Lord James of Albany is with Macdonald," said Stuart.

"What then? what of that? I should think it a reason why you ought the more to remain with Sibilla, as her affection for him is the greatest impediment to your suit."

"I doubt," replied Stuart, "if it is so much *her affection as her ambition*, and it is that which

makes me despair of ever succeeding ; but just now, she plainly told me, that she considered him dearer than ever, since, by the fate of his father and brothers, he stood much nearer to the crown."

"Can she be so sordid?" exclaimed the King; "then is there no faithful love in womankind; for of all ladies I have ever seen, I did think Sibilla Macdonald the most romantic in her attachment; besides, his sentence of outlawry and forfeiture has cut him off from the succession. But, how is it that all of you seem to count upon an early death for me? Is not our turbulent cousin my senior? and I surely am not so much older than yourself, Stuart, that you should be reckoned my successor, to say nothing of the present maternal condition of the Queen."

His Majesty said this in a sharp objurgatory manner; then, speedily recovering his wonted urbanity, he added, "But after all, Stuart, not to make too much ado about who shall have his head bound with a wreath of briars, as this very conversation of ours sufficiently shows the crown to be, I think you ought to remain. If love be not the entire sentiment that binds Sibilla to the outlaw, we can hardly question that ambition is not the sole motive which makes her father espouse his fortunes; and therefore, were you to remain behind, upon the pretext and plea of your devotion to Sibilla, perhaps, out of the policy of that device, some way might be found so to work on the avarice of Macdonald, as to make him abandon our guilty cousin to his own destiny—without, therefore, entering more curiously into your particular case, I lay my commands upon you to abide here with the Queen and her ladies, and it shall be made known that I have done so, because of your love and devotion for the daugh-

ter of the rebellious chieftain, things as familiar as scandal to every tongue in the court."

Stuart would have a second time solicited his Majesty not so to restrain him from taking the field, albeit in his heart none dissatisfied that he had been so peremptory; but the King said with a smile, "Honour, knighthood, propinquity, and loyalty, must now hush their remonstrances, and prove themselves soldiers and vassals of obedience. Your post and duty in the war is here in Holyrood-house." And with these words he parted from him, leaving him in the middle of the gallery, where he stood ruminating for some time; in which situation he was found by the Earl of Atholl, as that nobleman came with Sir William Chrichton, and others in the King's confidence, to attend the council.

"What has befallen you?" said the Earl to him, pausing as he passed leaning on the arm of Sir William Chrichton, the others with them passing on to the council-chamber.

"His Majesty," replied Stuart, "has dealt unkindly with me. He denies me the honour of going with him against Macdonald, and enjoins me to to remain here."

The Earl of Atholl, somewhat surprised to here this, dropped his hold of the Chancellor's arm, as he said—

"Why has his Majesty done so? Did he assign no reason?"

Sir William Chrichton looked observantly at the Earl while he said this; for there was a degree of haste and anxiety in the manner of his question, which struck him both as strange and singular.

"He thinks," replied Stuart, "that, considering how openly I have professed myself to the Lady Sibilla, it would not accord well with that profession to be engaged in adventures of warfare against her father."

"Then it was not," said the Earl, interrupting him, "out of respect to the relationship in which you stand to the succession?"

"I doubt not," interposed Sir William Crichton, "that his Majesty has determined wisely in this matter, though he may not have been governed by any regard to the succession—especially as the Queen has declared herself in the honoured condition of increasing their happiness."

"How!" exclaimed the Earl, with a look in which there was much of the eagerness of alarm; "is it as you say? When did the Queen announce it? I have not heard of it before. It surprises me to hear at this time of such an event."

"The King himself told me," said Stuart.

"Then it is true," replied the Earl, addressing himself to Sir William Crichton; "why should an occurrence so interesting to me have been concealed from me?"

"There is no concealment," said the Chamberlain; "not many minutes have passed since I heard it. It has been believed for some time, but not declared till this morning."

"Should the birth prove a daughter, of course she will succeed if she outlive her father. No change was made in the order of succession with respect to females by my father's settlement. It is very odd—I cannot think how it may be consistent with what I have been told."

"What have you been told, my Lord?" said Sir William Crichton, looking with some degree of amaze at the voice and manner with which Lord Atholl spoke; but the question, instead of obtaining an answer, recalled the Earl to himself, and he rejoined—

"The news cannot fail to be joyful to the kingdom, at a time when the minds of many are disturbed with doubts respecting the succession;

for there are those who think, that no sentence of outlawry or forfeiture can attain the right to the crown, and that James of Albany must of necessity succeed, were the throne to become vacant, even though no reversal of his attainder were to take place; so much does the royal dignity itself transcend all proceedings that have issued from its own process."

"I had not heard," replied the Chancellor sedately, "that there was any such questioning or controversy on the subject among the people. But I am not surprised that you, my Lord, should be somewhat affected by these things, considering how very nearly they touch upon your own immediate condition."

"It cannot be," said the Earl, "that Sir William Crichton thinks I would, for any affection of my own, take more heed of those things than becomes a faithful subject and a true counsellor. All the world knows, that I am a man far declined into the vale of years, and, by course of nature, cannot look to outlive the King, whom Heaven preserve in long life to administer the affairs of this poor country with great increase of prosperity to her people, and imperishable renown to himself. But to Stuart there, the issue of the Queens's maternity may be considered as a blight and disappointment; for I question not, that, like other young men, he has nourished the vanity of high chances, and may have counted something on his near relationship to the crown."

"His Majesty," interposed Stuart, "observed to me, that it was a strange thing so many should regard him as fated to die early, and be even cogitating of the succession."

"Think you, Sir William Crichton, that there is any thing in such forebodings?" said the Earl.

The Chancellor smiled, and, looking sharply, replied, "You do not think so, my Lord, for I

have heard you repeatedly deride all prognostications as vain superstition. But our time is up, and his Majesty will presently be in the council-chamber."

With which words they departed ; the Earl and the Chancellor walking up the gallery to the door by which the King had retired, and Stuart, slowly and thoughtfully, passing to the stairs which led down into the court below, where many young knights and gallants were assembled, armed and feathered for the expedition, all eager and glorying in their might and manhood, like eaglets in the morning, when they stand on the brink of their eyries, champing their beaks and flapping their pinions, impatient for the sun, that they may swoop to their quarry.

CHAP. XXXII.

AMONG other events that came to pass, about the epoch of these things whereof recital has been made, was the voluntary departure of the disconsolate Duchess of Albany from Tantallon, to the summer lodge on Inchmurin in Lochlomond, the only pendicle that she could be moved to accept of all the princely earldom of her ancestors. There, with the aged Lady Glenjuckie, who had come with her from Falkland and patiently partaken of her captivity and sorrow, she was minded to pass the mournful remainder of her days, like some sequestered nun, devoted to abstinence and mourning.

By the King's preparations to suppress the rebellion of Macdonald, of whose enterprise she had heard the rumour, though not of her son the Lord James being with him, her journey to Lennox was rendered slow and tardy; for horses were difficult to be had, save such as were accounted of no worth either for road or raid; and her venerable gentlewoman, being afflicted with a sciatica, could not abide the oscillations of any other carriage than a litter. On the morning, however, of the ninth day of her departure from Tantallon, the Duchess reached the margent of the lake, having travelled all the preceding night by a lone and moorland path, that she might eschew the dismal sight of the towers of Stirling, near to which she was constrained to pass, by reason of the great lack of horses in the towns and hostels on the roads.

When she had reached the place where she intended to embark, no boat was at hand, and she was, in consequence, obligated to remain on the shore till a messenger could procure one from some distance. Fain would Leddy Glenjuckie have persuaded her to go to the Castle of Balloch, and to take up her abode there for a season; but the Duchess remembered that it was the scene of her joyful childhood, and a woful train of terrible reminiscences, that came with the thought of what had befallen her since she had left it, caused her tears to flow. The anguish of that grief, however, soon subsided into the melancholy calm which had become almost the habitude of her mind, and she sat down on a rock close by the brim of the lake, and resting her cheek on her hand, awaited the return of her errander. There was indeed a soft and consolatory spirit abroad over all nature at that time, and its soundless tranquillity was in unison with the meditations of the weary heart.

The day was grey, still, sober, and mild, without sunshine or shower;—the winds were asleep, and almost also the waters;—the birds were mute, but not with sullenness, and they shook the crystalline drops from the impearled leaves, as they busily pruned their wings, like gentle villagers preparing for church in the holiness of the Sabbath morning. The skies were not darkened with any cloud, but the mountain tops were hid in a resting mist, that hung like a canopy, lowered almost to the tufty hills of the little islands in the lake. It was a morning, when the lowing of cows and the bleating of lambs heard afar off, mingling with the bark of the shepherd's dog, seem tuned and musical;—when doves coo on the window-sills of the solitary maiden, who never listened to any other note of love, and who feeds them with crumbs treasured from her frugal supper; when daisies lift not their golden

eyes, but hang their heads, as if drowsy with some delicious excess ;—when bees pass from bloom to blossom in silence ;—when the dumb butterfly, that never spreads his wing but to the sun, rests as quiet as the pea-flower on its stalk under the leaf that he has made his canopy ;—and when the voiceless snail, in his satin doublet, stretches his eyehorns from side to side on the dewy sward, as if he wist not where to taste first, like a sable-vestured clerk at a banquet : in sooth, a season of quietude and calm, when wary grimalkin, looking out at the cottage door, and fain to pass to her lair beneath the bushes, often puts forth her foot to feel if indeed the soft air be too moist for her furred delicacy.

“ Sowlls and podies ! will it pe te Laidie Toochees. And is’t a to-be-surely that ye’ll pe a coose o’ te water, sitting on te stone al py yoursel lanerly, mi Laidie Toochees—Oomph.”

The Duchess, surprised by this salutation, rose suddenly, and on looking, beheld Glenfruin and several of his clansmen, who had come out of a birch and hazel wood that fringed the border of the lake, close to the spot where she was sitting.

Her Grace had known him in her youth, and she recognised his clansmen by their tartan ; but their appearance at that time, and the salutation of Glenfruin, whom she quickly recollected could not know her person so as to justify the wonder he affected at seeing her there, caused her to suspect, from his notour character, that he had come for no good. She, however, at once addressed him by name, and begged that he would send some of his men to assist the person whom she had already missioned to procure a boat to carry her to the island.

“ And we will pe tooing tat, curse taik me put we will, my Laidie Toochees,” replied Glenfruin ; “ and te laad Nigel, hur nain la’ful pegotten, a

praw craiter is te laad Nigel ; will na he pring te boat frae te ferry,—oomph. Put, sowlls and podies ! mi Laidie Toochees, and what for pe your Crace come here ? Ah, te King's judifications !—oomph. Aye, aye, mi Laidie Toochees, tere pe te cold hearth in te towers o' Palloch tis plesset morning.—Ye'll no pe a travel tere ?”

While Glenfruin was thus rasping the quickened griefs of the Duchess, the sound of oars was heard approaching, and soon a large and lumbering black boat, wherein stood his son together with her Grace's errander, was thereafter seen coming from behind the boughs of the adjacent birch and hazel.

“Pe pleased, mi Laidie Toochees, to make your commodity in te poat. Nigel, I say Nigel, ye ashypet teevel, will ye no pe spreading your plaid for her Crace, and tis oold madam, her maiden ?”

The young chieftain instantly took off his plaid, and spread it for their reception, while his father, brushing the grass with his bonnet, went bowing towards the Duchess to assist her into the boat.

Misfortune had so subdued her Grace's mind, as almost to extinguish every apprehension of personal danger; and perhaps she would, without hesitation, have allowed Glenfruin to place her aboard, but for the Leddy Glenjuckie, who had hitherto stood marvelling and mute, exclaiming—

“But shall we be taken to Inchmurrin ?”

“Py and py, in tee coote time, mi laidie madam—Oomph ! But her Crace will be pleased to come first wi me on a veesitation to the shieling of Glenfruin—caz you see, mi Laidie Toochees, tat ter pe ploody repellions o' te Mactonald and te Lord Hamies, wha pe come hame frae te outlaw, for a tribulation—Put te King—Oomph.

“Alas !” cried the Duchess, clasping her hands and casting her eyes hopelessly to heaven, “and

is my son embarked with the rash Macdonald in his wild enterprise?"

Young Glenfruin, from the moment that he beheld her Grace, was touched with admiration and awe; and seeing her tears falling, and her august struggle to control her renewed sorrow, spoke apart to his father, but the dour old man knit his brows and shook his head, saying—

"Sowlls and podies! and what would te King speech, if te pird in te air or te adversities o' Glenfruin were to tell him in his preevy counsel?—Oomph. When she'll pe come here, sowlls and podies, is't no a sun and tay-light!—to mak a repellion in Lennox—Oomph? Te sheep and te cow pe te wisdom creatures, Nigel. Got's curse, Nigel Glenfruin, you peast.—Oomph.

The Duchess soon discerned, by what she overheard of their discourse, that Glenfruin had made her his prisoner;—and her gentlewoman began to make audible lament at the new misfortune, and to bewail the mischance which had thrown them into such rude custody, till her mistress chided her unavailing and bootless complaint, by saying—

"We are in your power, Glenfruin; two poor old defenceless women, with these few simple and unarmed serving-men; we could make no resistance to your force were we even so minded. Help me into the boat; and, I pray you, let your men be gentle with my aged friend there. Alas! it was not so that I thought her old age would have passed with me. But it doth please the irresponsible Heavens, to fill my cup with salt, salt tears. There is, however, a sweet mercy in store, that, I trust, will hereafter make me forget the bitterness of my earthly fortune."

Glenfruin, with some endeavour at courtesy, proffered his arm to the Duchess; whereupon his son, beckoning to one of the men to draw near, went with tenderness to the afflicted Lady

Glenjuckie, and invited her to lean upon them as she stepped from the rock into the boat.

"Laads," said Glenfruin to the menials who had come with the Duchess, and who were still standing beside their horses, "ye'll pe pringing toon to te poat al te lappetries o' to Laidie Toochees, and ye'll be o' a discretion wi te horses to te Glenfruins—as we'll let you depart wi' a civility.—Oomph."

The serving-men, when they saw their mistress and the lady seated in the boat, looked at one another, and all suddenly, with one accord, vaulted into the saddles and galloped away.

"Sowlls and podies," cried Glenfruin, rising, and looking at the speed with which they scoured along the hill-side. "Got's curse! Ooomph." He then sat down beside the Duchess; for seeing it was impossible to overtake the fugitives, he submitted to the disappointment, and calmly ordered the boatmen to push off from the shore.

CHAP. XXXIII.

WHILE the realm was shaken by the rumours and tidings, that came hourly rushing from Inverness concerning the rebellion of the Lord of the Isles, Sir Robert Græme, who on his banishment, had, instead of going forth the kingdom, taken refuge among the wilds and fastnesses of Perthshire, on hearing what had happened, went to join the rebels, and reached the tent of Macdonald on the evening of the day on which the news arrived of the King's approach, and of the young Lord Robert Stuart having remained at the court, because of the marriage which his Majesty had settled to take place between him and the Lady Sibilla.

There, when he entered, he found Macdonald and the Lord James in an eager and sharp controversy. The Lord of the Isles being seemingly much moved and disturbed by the report of the great force which the King was bringing against them, while the friendless outlaw suspected that he was only desirous of a pretext to return home, because of the rumoured match which had been formed for his daughter,—the which match, considering the then forlorn condition of her first lover, was plain, to all capacities, a thing which the Macdonald would likely approve and prefer.

Accordingly, after the first salutations and welcomings were over, they addressed themselves to Græme as an umpire in their debate, the Lord James beginning by inquiring, if he had, in the course of his journey, heard any account of the

army which the King was bringing. "We are told," said he, "that it trebles ours, and Macdonald has become afraid, and thinks we ought to retreat."

"I wish, my Lord," interrupted the chieftain, "that you would measure your words more according to the meaning of your mind. I am not afraid,—but seeing how slenderly we are supported, and the little disposition shewn by any of the old friends of the Albanies to take part with us, I doubt if it will be wise to wait-till King James come up."

"There are no such men as friends of the Albanies in Scotland," replied Græme, sternly, remembering in what manner they had failed and faltered when he had laid violent hands on the King in parliament:—"Every one now seeks his own particular advantage, and not the least grievance of the parchment laws of our English tyrant, for I account him no Scot albeit he was born in the land, is that they supersede the virtue of standing by one another, and reducing us all to be the thralls of his judicatory and officers."

"You speak worthily, Sir Robert," said the Lord James, "and it was to restore the liberties of the former times that Macdonald took up arms; but since he heard that his faithless daughter is to be wedded to Stuart, whose chance of inheriting the crown he accounts better than an outlaw's, he sees the King's forces through the mist, and would persuade me that they are all giants, which he dare not encounter."

"I beseech you both," exclaimed Græme, "to spare these revilings.—It may be discreet, my Lord, not to adventure too much at this time; a retreat is sometimes better than a victory,—and since you have been so balked in the hopes you had formed of those who were the friends of your family,—friends, while it had any thing to

give,—there may be wisdom in Macdonald avoiding the King's power, without supposing that he is thereto incited by any sinister consideration on his daughter's account. Remember, he is an open and declared rebel, and when you think of the fate of your own house, you cannot but know that the remission of his offence will never be granted by King James."

Macdonald, during this speech, drew himself back from the light that was on the table before them, and, folding his arms, listened as an auditor who had no part in their colloquy, but with gathered brows and scowling eyes,—which shewed how deeply it shook his spirit.

"It is reported," replied the Lord James to Græme, when he paused, "that the King has abated in his severity,—and, indeed, you are yourself, after what you attempted, evidence of the truth of the report."

"How!" cried Græme, with a hoarse and wrathful voice, of which however the rage was rather the expression of some agency of the memory than of anger at the young Lord; "call ye it an abatement of severity, to be degraded below the basest condition of man? To live the life of a hunted beast, that hears, in every rustle of the bramble-bush where he couches, the dogs of his pursuer. Recollect what I was, and think what I am now!—I am here as a skulking and companionless poacher,—call you that to me an abatement of severity? The time was, when only my whistle could, like the invocation of a wizard, change the heather and the fern into crested warriors; but the mocking of the invisible echo is all the answer that I should now receive, if I were to venture, on the hills that were my own, to try the sound of my voice!"

"If," said the Lord James, looking round to Macdonald,—"*if the Lord of the Isles can endure to be such a thing, let him make his peace*

when he pleases with the King. I have no claim upon his friendship,—Sibilla's faithlessness has dissolved our league."

"Your own taunts, my Lord, have done so," exclaimed Macdonald, rising with scorn on his lips, and quitting the tent. The Lord James, resenting the manner of his look, laid his hand on the hilt of his dagger; but Græme caught him firmly by the wrist, and said—

"Is it thus by quarrelling with your friends that you hope to avenge your wrongs. But come, we are both too long here,—Macdonald's enterprise is plainly at an end,—and though, as his guests, we may be safe, yet if it be that he wishes to make his peace with the King, who knows in what way he may be worked upon to give us up."

The Lord James felt the full force of what Græme meant to convey, and quitting his seat hastily, they left the tent together, and made for the hills. They had not, however, proceeded far, when the young Lord began to repine at his precipitation, and his uncourteous manner of thus abandoning several brave gentlemen who had joined the Macdonald with their clansmen on his own account, and he urged Græme to return with him, that he might take such leave of them as their spirit and devotion to his cause deserved, or perhaps induce them still to adhere to his desperate fortunes.

Græme, however, strongly remonstrated against this disposition. "If hereafter," said he, "circumstances arise wherein you may ask again their service, the equivocal conduct of Macdonald will serve as a good excuse for your unceremonious departure to-night. But it were to throw yourself into the very teeth of destruction, after having come away, leaving Macdonald in the temper we did, were we to return into his power. It may be, that he truly is dis-

posed to make his peace with the King on account of this new match for his daughter ; if so, then you may rely upon it, you were no sooner beyond the circle of his encampment, than his hospitality ended, and orders given to consider you as his enemy."

While they were thus discoursing, sometimes halting and looking behind, they reached the brow of a steep bank, shaggy with brushes and brambles. The night was far advanced, but the stars so shone out, that the dark outlines of the ruins of the town were visible below, amidst which a few feeble lights, as ineffectual as the lamps of the glow-worms, were seen here and there sprinkled. The castle, in the sullenness of its strength, rose gloomily in the distance, and the bartizans and battlements of the towers seemed, by the upcast glare of the camp-fires of the besiegers, like the frowning eyes and gathered foreheads of wrath, jealousy, and scorn.

It was a scene that well accorded with the hostile spirit of Græme, and he stopt to look at it with a fierce enjoyment of malignant satisfaction.

"Aye, ye may gloom and glower, Robin Græme," cried a voice at his feet from amidst the bushes on the steep ; "but ye'll ne'er get your will nor your dues, till you have humbled yourself to your enemy." And with these words the Spaewife scrambled up the bank, and, with her rude staff in her arms, stood before him.

"Anniple," said the Lord James to her, for she was well known over all the country, both in hall and hostel,—“where have you come from to-night?”

"I have nothing to say nor to spae to you, Lord James,—when the skein of your fortune's ravelled, ye'll hear tell o' me. Robin Græme, I redde ye to part frae him, or ye'll wrang your-

sel' of what ye'rē weel worthy, and eke a marriage mar,—

“So come ye wi' me, and let him bide,
And think nae what shall then betide,
And ye'll blithen the heart o' a bonny bride,
That sighs in the bower alone, Robin.”

Neither Græme nor the Lord James had any inordinate faith in freats; but the veracity of Anniple's foreknowledge had gained great renown far and near, and in that crisis of their adventures, especially as they at the time wist not well which way to take, they were disposed to give her more credit than perhaps they would have done on any other occasion.

“Shall I then be safe to return to Inverness,” said the Lord James.

“If ye're to be hang't, my Lord, ye'll ne'er be drown't,” replied the Spaewife.

“But whither would ye, Anniple, that I should go?” interrupted Græme.

“Up the hill, and down the hill, and o'er the water; and up the hill, and down the hill, and o'er the water; and up the hill, and down the hill, and o'er the water;—and there ye'll meet wi' a man that has the key of a castle,—

“And when in that keep ye're warded in,
Nor prince nor power in Christendie
Frae you that keep shall win.”

“She promises you fair, Sir Robert,” said the Lord James; “take her advice, and here let us separate; for, notwithstanding Macdonald's sordid perfidy, I shall return to Inverness, where I doubt not still to find friends.”

Græme again attempted to dissuade him from returning, and even began to jeer at Anniple's predictions; but she suddenly interrupted him by laying her hand on his mouth, saying,

“Hush! I hear Macdonald breathing in the wind,—Listen, hark, he’s passing afar off in the valley.”

It was even so; for, when the Lord James went back to the camp, he was informed that the chieftain had set off alone to throw himself on the King’s mercy, and he found all the clansmen preparing to retire to their respective regions in the isles and among the hills. Thus were his hopes again blasted, while the anguish caused by the constancy of his ill fortune was sharpened by the thought of Sibilla’s broken faith. Meanwhile, Sir Robert Græme, pursuing his course southward, parted from the Spaewife, who, as her nature led, wandered purposeless away.

CHAP. XXXIV.

MANY things were in the meantime growing to fruit at the Court, where the Lady Sibilla, on parting from Stuart in the gallery, as set forth, went straight to her aunt, the Countess of Ross, and told her, that until her father's enterprise was resolved and determined, she would give no farther tendance on the Queen. In vain did that discreet lady exhort her to the contrary, and represent, that, by being in companionship with her Majesty, she might find means and opportunities to mitigate the King's ire. But Sibilla was not to be moved by any stress of elocution, so that she continued to abide with the Countess while the royal preparations for the suppression of the rebellious raid were in process, seldom appearing abroad but in a sequestered and lanerly manner.

It came however to pass that the King, being instructed how none of the great barons and chiefs of the north, of whose clans and preparations he stood most in apprehension, had joined the rebels, but that in many parts where the Lord James and Macdonald counted on friends, the only demonstration made was for the royal cause, his Majesty resolved only to send forward the vanguard of his power, and to direct the Lords and Earls on whom he could rely, to repair to their castles, and with their respective clans there await his summons. Thus it happened that the Earl of Atholl went to his stronghold in the Blair, or plain of his country, and

there arrived with a great host of Highlanders, about the time when Sir Robert Græme, under the influence and incitement of the Spaewife, bent his course southward. But the young gallant, his nephew, Stuart, went not with him, being, in furtherance of the King's politic device, detained at Edinburgh, nothing loath, in the hope of achieving the conquest of the Lady Sibilla's true and invincible heart. In that adventure, however, he made but small progress; for when, by the connivance of the Countess of Ross, he sometimes gained access to her otherwise inaccessible sequestration, she gave little heed to his loving and fond professions.

"You wage," said she to him one day, "a bootless war with me. My heart is pledged to a prince of a royal nature and heroic daring;—to the heir of the kingdom, yea, to the open challenger of the King, and think you that I will stoop to hear the dainty protestations of any meaner man?"

"You amaze me, Lady," replied Stuart, "I am the equal of my rash cousin in every thing but his treasons."

"And you are only not equal to him in them, because you lack the spirit to assert your own rights. Think you that he would so meekly endure to be cut off from his inheritance by any ordinance of sordid time-servers, such as those were that gave the crown to the bastard progeny of Elizabeth Mure, and defrauded the lawful issue of King Robert the Second of their birthright?"

Stuart was amazed to hear her speak so boldly; and her taunts entered into the quick of his soul, for he had ever felt as his uncle the Earl of Atholl felt, that the puthumous law of the succession was a grievous injury to all the descendants of the marriage with Euphemia of Ross; which marriage, till the enactment of the

law, had been accounted the only lawful matrimony which that King had really contracted, notwithstanding the general commiseration with which the fate of the fair Elizabeth Mure had been lamented. He stood in consequence some time struck with wonder, which Sibilla perceiving, added scornfully—

“I doubt not there is treason in my words—my father and my betrothed husband are in rebellion—why should not I too think and feel as a rebel? But go,—complete the loyalty of tamely submitting to be shut out from your own rights, by accusing me of treason. Why, man, if you had half the manhood that’s in the left hand of your unfortunate cousin, the Earl of Atholl would long ere now have been King, and yourself the heir to the throne.”

Stuart trembled to see that the Lady Sibilla, while she thus spoke, was pale and dreadful, her eyes flashing fire, and the beauty of her countenance haggard with rage and contempt.

“I pray you, sweetest lady,” said he softly, “let no such perilous thoughts escape you. Why should the Earl of Atholl or myself shake the kingdom from its propriety with such old stories, seeing that we are placed by Providence, despite all human contrivance to the contrary, so very near the throne.”

“You mistake me,” replied Sibilla, with a haughty air; “I would not invite you to any undertaking. I but spoke of that humility of spirit,—Christian it is,—which so patiently holds up the cheek to the smiter. Deeds shew the man, and I esteem you by what you have proved yourself. The only daring thing you have ever done has been to offer yourself to me as the rival of your brave kinsman, and that,—very prudently, my Lord, has been most valorously adventured behind his back.”

Stuart felt as if his passion was entirely

quenched, and he gazed at the flashing frenzy of her eye, and the haggard energy of her colourless cheek and quivering lip, with almost irrepressible aversion; but the feminine fit was spent, and while he stood contemplating her with astonishment, and marvelling that he should ever have thought her lovely, or deserving to be loved, the gentle spirit of her nature returned, and she sat down and began to weep.

"Why, my Lord," said she, and her tears were fast flowing, "do you break in upon my forlorn estate? Am I not betrothed to your ill-fated cousin? Have I not shewn to all the world with what sincerity I hold myself to be his bride? Is it not then as an insult to a chaste wife to speak to me with professions of love? Let there be, from this time, an end to all hope and protestations on your part, else I must regard you as indeed meriting those reproaches which, in my distraction, I have too bitterly expressed. Go, my Lord, and if it may be accepted as any atonement for my rash words, believe that I feel proud of the preference wherewith I have been honoured, but that your courtesies have always been as wormwood to my spirit, shewing as if you thought I could be false and inconstant to the strongest promises that ever maiden pledged with man. If not ordained to be the wife of your cousin, I shall never be bride to any other man."

The sadness of her voice, and the soft solicitation with which her eloquent eyes aided the wish that he would desist from his importunate devotion, renewed with redoubled tenderness the admiration which she had so long inspired. But the firmness with which she declared her determination to accept only the Lord James, taught him that his passion was without hope. Twice he essayed to speak, and to tell her something of the emotions wherewith his bosom was

agitated, but his tongue could find no words, and he quitted her presence, torn with the conflicts of rejected love, contemned manhood, baffled desires, and protestations scorned.

In the whirlwind of this storm within, he hurried to the King's chamber to ask that he might have leave to quit the court, never to return while Sibilla was there ; but in going thither he saw a great concourse of people assembled at the gate, the guards, and halbardiers, and archers, all drawn out. On hastily inquiring what had chanced, a confused response by many tongues informed him, that the Lord of the Isles had suddenly appeared before the King, while his Majesty was at his orisons in the chapel,—some said he had attempted the King's life,—and all agreed that he had been seized on the spot, and was then in the Abbey.

So strange an accident made him at the moment forget his own cares, and, rushing through the guards, he ascended the stairs to learn the circumstances of so singular an occurrence as that the rebel should, in such a place, and at such a time, have presented himself before the King.

CHAP. XXXV.

WHEN Stuart came into the King's presence, his Majesty was walking to and fro in the chamber, plainly in great molestation of mind; and the Queen was standing apart by herself in the bower window, seemingly deterred from breaking in upon his cogitations by the violent battle of thought wherewith he was agitated. On observing them in this state, Stuart would have retired; but he perceived, that on his entrance the King had glanced his eye towards him, so that he was in a manner constrained to remain; and while he stood at the door, Sir William Chrichton, with others of the council, came in, upon whose appearance his Majesty mastered his feelings, and resumed his natural equanimity.

"Sir William," said the King, on seeing the Chancellor, "I send for you to determine respecting this bold action of Macdonald. He has thrown himself on my honour and mercy, and yet how well we know he is not to be trusted—the cause of his doing so sufficiently verifies. We had given him permission to return unmolested home, and to abide in his island in peace, but no sooner did an occasion arise whereby he thought to advance himself, reckless of the damage he might cause to others, than he again took the field. But he has placed himself defenceless in my power, and truly I pray heaven to instruct me what I ought to do, that my honour may be safe, and the commonweal protected."

The Chancellor went respectfully up to the King, and said—

“Macdonald, in so casting himself into the hands of your Majesty, if we may judge by his heretofore actions, has not done so from that nobility of motive which entitles him to appeal to the judicature of honour, but has been compelled by some constraint of circumstance which he could not master, or is actuated by what with him is a no less forcible argument, some view of advantage. In either case he merits but the same treatment, and the law and the common-weal claim the first consideration.”

“I know all that,” replied the King quickly—
“I discern all that,—but then he has thrown himself into my own hands, and I am forced to consider, not only what as a King I must do, but likewise what, to preserve my knighthood unstained, I ought to do. Is it, think you, possible that there may be any duty of the monarch inconsistent with the honour of the man?”

“I should think not,” replied Sir William Chrichton sedately.

“Then what the King’s part is,” said his Majesty, “I have long studied to know, and perhaps not altogether in vain; for I have never considered royalty by its trappings.—The doffed bonnet, the bended knee, macers and heralds, and golden baubles, with the butterflies of fortune’s summer, and the shouts of the brute multitude, whose plaudits are often loudest when it’s coarse appetite is served with offal, these make nothing in my estimate of the dignity royal.—No: Sir William, there is no King but he who dares to do every thing save wrong—who fears nothing mortal, but to be unjust—whose spirit is inaccessible to the inflations of sycophancy—whose throne is the fortitude of his mind,—his sceptre a benevolent will—and the jewels of his diadem precious opinions bought from the wise

and good. Of this empire every man may be possessed that is worth his soul, and he that has not attained to such sovereignty is but a slave, though he were adorned by all the East, and served by ten times the submission of all the millions that crawled before the worst of the Cæsars."

"Your Majesty," replied the Chancellor, "has but to follow the light of your own wisdom in this matter."

"Then," interrupted the King, "as he has thrown his life into my hands, let him have it; but you, and others who are the King's officers, look well that no mischisf ensue; for he will hourly count on some remission of whatever you may determine concerning himself or his estate, if his daughter accept our cousin, Stuart—the renown of which match, and not contrition as he professes, has alone, I question not, brought him hither."

Stuart at these words stept forward and said, "Let him not then reckon any longer on that, nor his sentence be measured by any chance of his daughter becoming my wife.—The hope of that is quenched."

"How!" cried the King, "What is this? When was this?"

"It is so, and please your Majesty: ten kingdoms would not bribe me to address myself again to the Lady Sibilla."

The King looked at him, for a moment, gravely, and then, with pleasantry, said—"But one smile may."

"No, never; she is not what I thought she was. I have been blind to her defects, albeit I must still do homage to her beauty."

"Fy, Stuart; to disparage a lady whom you have so long worshipped, is to acknowledge *some defect in yourself*. It argues but little for *your valour to be daunted by a maiden's frown*."

Sir William Chrichton, and those who had come with him, seeing his Majesty falling into this easy vein, withdrew; and the Queen coming forward, also began to jeer Stuart on being so faint-hearted. But the scorn with which Sibilla had spoken of his tameness made his temper as it were skinless to raillery, in so much, that the King seeing him so easily teased, yielded to the sportive malice which his querulousness provoked, and galled him with jibes.

"Nay," said his Majesty, "if thou hast lost not only thy heart, thy suit, but even thy temper, truly we must account thee as having come out of this adventure poorly indeed. Beshrew me, if any damsel in the furnace of a gossip's tongue will choose thee for her champion :

He that would thrive with lady bright,
Must prove himself in all points a knight,
Boastful and brave, and ready to fight."

"I entreat a parley," said Stuart sharply. "Your Majesty does not impute to me any diffidence with respect to fighting."

The King laughing to see him so chafed, and being minded to prick him still more, replied—

"Why! did you not prefer dallying here with the ladies, to the rude grappling of Macdonald's kerns? Nay, I do not impute it to you as any defect of wisdom—for, verily, it is a pleasanter thing to be amidst the tinkling of ladies' tongues, in a perfumed chamber, than to abide the dissonance of blows and bagpipes amid the bleak winds of the Highland hills."

"Did your Majesty," exclaimed Stuart, with some lack of his usual homage, "but command me to remain here that I might be afterwards so scoffed at?"

The King perceiving that he had touched him nearer the quick than he had intended, and being

disturbed thereat, said, "But a truce with our controversy. I would not have you so abruptly renounce Sibilla, merely because you may have found her to-day in an ungenerous mood."

His Majesty would have added something more, but Stuart cried abruptly, trembling with passion, "Why am I to be ruled in my affections? In these your subjects may be left free."

The King looked at him with surprise; and, taking the Queen's hand, turned away, as he said, with a smile—

"By supper-time, perhaps, you may have recovered one of your losses,—the greatest, if it be not found, cousin, I mean your wonted good humour."

So saying, he led the Queen away, leaving Stuart alone, who thereupon began to pace the floor, clenching his hands, and using those vehement gestures which betray vindictive meditations, while, from time to time, he exclaimed—

"He kept me with himself—made me his companion—lulled me by a show of friendship,—and while the world saw the cunning of his policy, I have been despised for continuing so long blind.—Yes: I have deserved both his taunts and the contempt of Sibilla. But I am not a worm, to be ever trod upon; nor a snail, always to shut my eyes at the approach of danger and let it come. He would not have dared to treat me as he has done to-day, were not Macdonald, the last friend of the unfortunate Albanies, in his power; but now he ventures openly to shew what he intends. The condition of the Queen gives him the promise of heirs from himself. He is afraid of my elder rights, so unjustly set aside by our common grandfather. He seeks a pretext to make his other kindred take the road of poor old Murdoch and his sons, but I *will* match his cunning with cunning; and haply

when he least expects it, I may find a way to realize his fears. Yes, Sibilla, I thank thee at least for that favour; in telling me what I ought to have been, thou hast taught me what I am; what I am destined to be time will shew. But my fate hangs by a maiden's honesty; so said the Spæwife; and that prediction was the shadow of my hope with Sibilla—but shadow and substance I am now sick of as to her, and my spirit is the lighter, for still when she seemed inclined to favour my suit, I thought of her first betrothment, and the love that she continued to cherish for the outlaw often damped the ardour of my passion. But now I am free; her influence over my fortune is ended, and I thank her for the taunts that have roused me to the sense of my rights, and shamed away the base lethargy that has so long withheld me from asserting them."

In this manner, sometimes with vows of vengeance for the contumely with which he supposed the King had treated him; at others, with complaints against his own supineness, in being restrained from vindicating his birthright, by the false loyalty he had learnt from the Earl of Atholl, did he continue to pace the chamber for a season, and ever and anon he rejoined that he was no longer the thrall of hopeless love; and that if his destiny was indeed subject to a maiden's honesty, it was not by Sibilla he would receive his doom. Alas! poor youth, he knew not that, by the upbraidings wherewith she had chafed his spirit the impulse had been given which was then hurrying him on to the consummation of his destiny. But it is ever so with us all—children of fate!—to whom it surely is ruled, that the things most fatal should ever seem the fairest; for in nothing which affects our particular selves can we discern either the springs or the issues of the influences that govern fortune.

CHAP. XXXVI.

SIR ROBERT GRÆME had, in the meantime, after parting from the Spaewife, pursued his course southward, by moorland tracks and mountain paths, far remote from the highways. Her words dwelt in his spirit, as he waded alone the solitude of the heath, and he felt that the rocks might become as the morass, and the flexible windlestrae as the stubborn pine, but that he could never humble himself before the man who had driven him to such perdition of honour, and substance, and servitude, all that made life to him worth the having—so he accounted the King.

For three days, with but such casual fare as the sheilins of the shepherds on the hills could afford, he kept his solitary way. When his limbs were weary, and his feet torn with the harsh roots of the heather, and the sharp splinters of rifted stones in his untrodden path, he would sit down on the bare corner of some cliffy rock, and scowl around on the deserts of heather that covered all the expanse in view; and when peradventure he sometimes saw the wolf skulking below, and glancing towards him a hungry eye, he grudgingly thought of the bondage entailed on the condition of man—and the cruelty in his blood thickened.

At night he chose his lair in the hollow of the hills, and often, when gathered in his plaid, *alone his pillow*, as he saw the moon and the stars hurrying over him, like fugitives through
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the clouds, and heard the winds passing around, and the roar of waters sullenly rising from afar, he has started from the ground, and grasped the hilt of his dirk to draw it against his own fierce heart; but still the thought of dying unrevenged checked his purpose, and nerved him to endure the misery of unsatisfied hatred a little longer. Then he would lay himself down again, and after a short pause, sleep would suddenly descend upon him, like a vulture on her quarry, and devour him in dreams. The wolf that tracked him all day has been scared by the inward rage of his visionary revenge.

The morning to him brought no light, but only the blackness of fate; for, as he approached towards the glens that lead into the Lowlands, he expected to meet some of the royal army then streaming in from the south, by all the divers passes, to surround the rebels at Inverness; and the apprehension of falling into their hands was as dreadful as the fantasies which superstition creates in the darkness of night. It would baffle his remorseless intent; the fear of which made him lurk in glens and woods by day, and move in the night, in the moonshine on the hill, like some dark demon to the execution of some guilty purpose.

"Sowlls and podies! ye'll be te tevil wi' te foots o' ti cow—Oomph!" was the sudden salutation which he received, when, under the shadow of a cloud, in passing the third night round the corner of a rock in Badenoch, he stumbled over Glenfruin, who, with a numerous company of his clansmen, was so far advanced towards the appointed head quarters of the royal army, and had there laid themselves down to rest, without ward or sentinel, having no dread of an enemy in that place.

In the same moment that the chief so spoke, the Glenfruins started from their beds of fern,

and Græme was pinioned by the arms, and a prisoner.

"Laads," said Glenfruin, "ye'll tak te sword and te dirk frae te man—tat's what ye will—Oomph;—and ye'll mak te rives o's plaid, and a tie on te hands behind te pack and wi' te twa legs, for a salvation—Oomph."

He then addressed himself to the prisoner. "Aye? al py yourselph, and a nopody at al—oomph. Wha will ye pe, and what will pe your pleasantries here? Got's curse, ye had te foot on hur powel—Oomph."

Græme, surprised, but not overwhelmed, by this sudden mischance, replied, as the clansmen were tearing his plaid and twisting the stripes into ropes to bind his hands and feet—

"You will learn betimes to-morrow what it is to seize in this manner a messenger to the King."

"Sowlls and podies! and is a' to-be-surely that ye pe te message for te King?—Oomph. Aye! te message for te King—tat's a cogitation. —Sowlls and podies, he has te feather in te bonnet!—Oomph.—Put wha can see't wi' te moon! —Oomph.—Laads, straik him a ped, for he pe the King's message, and te morn we'll mak a congee, every mother's son of us, tat's what we will. Will te King's message be pleased to lie toon for a commodity o' te sleep? Caz you see, we pe come o'er te hills, far awa."

"I can have no objection to rest, being myself tired; but, I pray you, let me have the freedom of my hands and feet."

"Aye! will nae te King's message pe resting without te foots? Te foots pe in te stable for te night—Oomph."

Græme seeing that it would be of no avail to controvert his condition at that season, threw himself on the ground, and two of the clansmen, *one at each shoulder*, sat down to watch and to

ward beside him. Glenfruin stretched himself also, wrapt in his plaid, again in the lea of the rock, where he continued some time without, however, falling asleep. At last he turned himself round, and half rising on his arm, said,

"Will te King's message be pleased?"

"Well," said Græme gruffly, "What do you want!"

"Just a civility. What pe te news te message will tak to te King?"

"Macdonald has left Inverness."

"Sowlls and podies!—Oomph.—Te Macdonald no fight.—Aye! and te repellion pe al, wi' te leaf o'te tree tat's made in a teal for a toor?—Oomph."

Glenfruin again laid himself back on the ground, and after continuing some time silent, he raised himself a second time.

"Will te King's message pe pleased to speech a word? Te Mactonald—he will pe te man wi' te pig purse py 'tis lifting. Will tere no pe te wee town for a judification, tat te goot subject may rewart himsel for te repellion?—Oomph."

"The good subject," replied Græme, "had better think well before he rewards himself; for the King's justice is not to be trifled with."

"Sowlls and podies, te King's justice!—Oomph. It's a justice to travel away te foots o' te goot subject for a noting at al."

Sir Robert Græme never having before met Glenfruin, and not being acquainted with the depth of his devices, was so far thrown off his guard by this observation, that he said, from the smarting of his own punishment,—

"Justice and suffering now a days, in Scotland, are nearly the same thing, and law is the disguise of tyranny."

Glenfruin pricked up his ears, but Græme felt that he had said too much, and to lessen the

impression, added, "So say the King's enemies ; but this rebellion being over, as I doubt not it is by this time, we shall hereafter hear less of such disloyalty."

"Aye," replied Glenfruin. "O put tat's moving. We'll pe göing home te morn, tat's what we will—Oomph ! What pe laa ; put a pogle in a pook !"

Græme was, however, now on his guard ; and Glenfruin perceiving, after divers other endeavours to draw him farther on, that it would be of no avail, composed himself for the remainder of the night.

In the meantime the Earl of Atholl, as rehearsed, had come to the castle of Blair, and had there gathered the main power of his vassals to be in readiness to join the King when his Majesty would come up with the Lowlanders. But more exact information having reached Edinburgh of the strength of the rebels than the magnified wonderment of the first rumour, the King had resolved not to head the army himself, but to send forward the warlike Earl of Angus. Accordingly it came to pass, as told in the foregoing chapter, that his Majesty was still at Holyrood when Macdonald arrived to cast himself on his mercy. Of this event the Earl of Atholl received the first intimation from Stuart his nephew, who, on the same night that Græme so chanced to fall into the hands of Glenfruin, came suddenly to the castle, having, in the afternoon of the day wherein he was so chafed both by the Lady Sibilla and the King, obtained his Majesty's permission to go thither. The King had indeed, with sorrow, observed the inebriation of chagrin wherewith the Lady Sibilla's irreversible refusal had infected his brain, and holding him in great affection on account of his many knightly qualities, and hitherto unblemished fidelity as a kins-

man and true subject; was right well content to give him leave to retire into Atholl till the sore of his heart was salved by the mollifying ministrations of time.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Now it came to pass, that the same night, after the Lady Atholl had retired to her chamber, the Earl, with his nephew, remained sitting together by themselves in a turret-room discoursing of divers matters, wherein Stuart from time to time breathed his discontent against the King; for, though standing in awe of his uncle's renown for loyalty, he was fearful to give utterance to the impoisoned thought which his Majesty's free nature had so innocently bred; yet was he not altogether able to repress the adder, nor keep the fascinations of its eye from attracting the fated spirit of the Earl.

"He has no respect," said Stuart, "as we have seen, even for the dignity of his own blood; but, like the Ottoman, considers high and low as if we were all slaves—courageless eunuchs bought in a market."

"Hush!" replied the Earl, "and set a guard on your tongue; for though it must be confessed that he does lack the accustomed discrimination of the Scottish Kings, yet is he singularly endowed with many princely virtues; in sooth a just man—a very Solon in the inditing of laws.—But I implore you to be wise; for have you not observed how much more cruelly his justice went against our kinsmen, the Albanies, than any other offenders?"

"Aye, Græme, who laid hands upon him even on the throne, in parliament, when arrayed with crown and sceptre, was allowed to go with his

life," replied Stuart; "I have often thought of that."

"Besides," rejoined the Earl, "think in what dubiety we stand with respect to the crown. But for the settlement of my father, King Robert the Second, I should this day have been of right King of Scotland. I beseech you to consider that, and how much we both, you as my rightful heir, are placed within the scope of his jealousy, especially now that the Queen is in the way to be a mother."

"How is it, my Lord, that you have so quietly endured that great injustice?"

"You are too young to remember the boundless domination of the Regent Robert, poor Duke Murdoch's father, else you would not ask that question. And wherefore should I, a childless old man, stir in any rash unavailing pretension; for, to do the King justice, since his restoration he has greatly caused good order and security to abound, albeit too harsh in his ministry towards many of the nobility."

"O, there was a time!" exclaimed Stuart, "when any sovereign to have breathed against the old free prerogatives of the Scottish nobles but a moiety of what the King has done, by his slights of law and judicature, would have raised the whole land like a whirlwind."

"You give your anger too wide a license, nephew," replied the Earl; "I must not suffer you to fall into such habits of discourse, especially now when the whole realm is again submissive to his dominion."

"But the world," said Stuart, "thinks our submission—mine at least—to come of a tame spirit; I cannot brook to have myself longer so unworthily considered."

"Hush! these are rash words, nephew, what would you do?"

"Have you not told me, that but for the treble

injustice which gave the crown to the bastards of Elizabeth Mure, you should have this day been King of Scotland?"

"I charge you talk not of such things in that way. Rash young man! I would but do my duty were I to give you up for showing so much of a seditious spirit."

Stuart was somewhat rebuked by the warmth of the Earl, and made no immediate reply; at last he said—

"It is current among the commonalty, that it has been prophesied you will be King."

"So I have heard; and when it is considered that there is but the King now between me and the throne, it is no improbable event, notwithstanding my years."

"Anniple of Dunblane," rejoined Stuart, long ago told me that my fate hangs—"

"Anniple of Dunblane," interrupted the Earl, "Surely you set no store by the ravings of the ta'en-away. What man in the possession of a sober mind would give heed to her jargon?"

"But many of her sayings, I have often heard, have come to pass. She has a sharp and very singular discernment of what passes in the minds of those to whom she speaks; for it is with but few that she will hold any discourse."

The complexion of the Earl went a little at this remark, and he looked around unconsciously, as if somewhat alarmed; and then said—

"If it is ordained that I am to come to the crown, and but one life now stands in the way, the event will come to pass without any ministry thereto on my part. But, nephew, let not your thoughts run upon such malcontent fancies. Seek rather to earn, as I have all my life done, the esteem of the wise and the good. It will better pave the way to a quiet succession, when the time may come, than any stratagem of human *artifice in which you can engage*. I pray you also

never to break this matter again to me. I am an old man—this grey head can ill bear the burden of a helmet—and any other way than the course of Providence needs the mediation of arms.”

“Think you then, my Lord,” exclaimed Stuart, “that I can patiently abide the taunts of a usurper; for such I will think he is, bating all that parchment can say to the contrary. You may permit him to possess your right—that is your own concern, my Lord—but he has wounded me past all cure: he has put salt into the wound.”

The Earl, on seeing Stuart rushing into this vehemence, rose and said—“You must find other ears than mine to breathe your treasons to. Is my honour as a subject so blemished, that you dare to tempt me with the dotage dream of setting aside King James. The greatest stain that ever my loyalty suffered, has been in the freedom with which you have this night ventured to express to me a querulous resentment. I will embark, rash boy, in no conspiracy. Think yourself fortunate that I do not forthwith send you to the King. Hence to your chamber, and ponder on what you have so traitorously spoken.”

Stuart, more disturbed by his manner than daunted at what he said, was at the moment disconcerted, and immediately retired; but the Earl remained, evidently in great agitation. He moved several paces from the spot where he was standing, and clasped his hands, and looked very wild and woe-begone. Then he again sat down, and bent his head upon his hand, resting on the table; and continued for some time like a marble image of cogitation. Suddenly he started up, and moved round the chamber many times with perturbed steps—often raising his hands and shaking them, as one that eschews the presence of some very dreadful sight. Anon he

would touch his aged locks, and look at his shrivelled hands, and fold them together, and remain with a melancholy air, and sigh, and almost weep.

But these fond struggles did not last long; for ever and anon his evil angel would come upon him, and nerve him with pride, making his age seem less, and brightening his countenance with a royal arrogance; which soon, however, changed into a dark and cruel look:—Then he would stalk hurriedly and stealthily across the room, holding his hand as if he grasped a murderous knife. But in that hideous attitude the fiend was repulsed; and he fell upon his knees, and with bitter tears cried woefully to the Heavens.

“I have not made a compact with perdition. Bring not dishonour upon this old head, which with the halo of grey hairs you have yourselves so adorned—yea, and annointed with the benedictions of good men, more preciously than the unction could have done with which the Prophet Samuel consecrated David against Saul.”

Then, having thus prayed, he rose, and as if fearful to trust himself with the awful controversy of his own thoughts, he hastily seized the light that stood upon the table, and without calling, as was his custom, for the tendance of any servant, hastened into his lady's bower.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

NEXT morning, being duly advertised that the rebellion of the Macdonald was at an end, and the different clans engaged therein dispersed, and retired to their respective countries, the Earl sent home likewise his vassals, and prepared to return to his lodging in Perth; the court being minded to come to Scone, where the King expected his attendance. But, in the course of the day, it came to pass that Glenfruin, having with him Sir Robert Græme, arrived at the castle, and being taken to the Earl, narrated in what manner the prisoner had fallen into his hands, and that he much doubted if he was, as he had pretended to be, the bearer of tidings to the King.

"For you see, mi Lord Eerl," said Glenfruin, "what would te King's message pe taking to tell te grouse and te ptarmigan on te hills?—oomph! and ten, mi Lord and Eerl, he pe in te chief's cloes, an te tartan pe o' te Græme.—Sowlls and podies! is't a to-be-surely, tat were al a tream and veesion—and he pe te Sir Robert tat was panished.—Sowlls and podies! it was a lamb and a lion, mi Lord and Eerl, te fal in te sleep wi' tat traitor man—put he had na te sword nor te tirk—oomph! Aye, aye, tat was a goot poleesee—oomph."

The Earl commended the discernment and dexterity of Glenfruin, and lauded the alert loyalty with which he had obeyed the first summons of the King to rendezvous with his clansmen at the place appointed—telling him, that he would

not fail to report his great merits to his Majesty.

"And ye'll pe pleased, mi Lord and Eerl," replied Glenfruin, "to count to te King al te cost and te monies for the tribulations o' te Laidie Toochee—tat's noo in te sheilin o' Genfruin, taking her pleasantries in a custodie—oomph! Put ye'll no forget tat we'll pe seeking no monies at al, nor te pay o' te mark or te crown ;—no, no, mi Lord and Eerl, Genfruin's paith a loyaltie and a liberallie ; an if te King will, in a smal way, just alloo tat bit shaping o' te land o' Lennox, it's just a loof and a palm, mi Lord and Eerl, atween te Leven water and te purn o' Glenfruin, we'll mak al our servitudes, paith for te taking o' te Laidie Toochee, and te traitor man tat's noo in te hal of mi Lord and Eerl, we'll mak it al a free gratos—a nothing at al."

The Earl did not exactly understand what Glenfruin meant in allusion to the Duchess of Albany being his prisoner, but he was so far informed with respect to the forfeited estate, as to know that the hand's-breadth of land whereof Glenfruin spoke so lightly, was one of the best domains in the earldom of Lennox. But as it had long been the Earl's endeavour to stand well with all men, he spoke fair, and with sweet words, to the old chieftain ; at the same time, giving him no encouragement to expect that the King would consider his services at so high a price as he had himself put upon them.

"For you know, Glenfruin," said he, "that among the English, where the King was so long bred, true subjects are expected to do their duty without reward ; albeit their kings sometimes bestow small marks of favour where the merit is very singular. I do not, however, say, that his Majesty will not discern the merits of your services, and reward them even with much more than the lands whereof you have spoken ; but

there may be persons about the King who may represent those lands as of more value than you think they are; and you know his Majesty is, in all matters touching the property of the crown, guided by the determinations of his council."

"Sowlls and podies! mi Lord and Eerl, it would be a judification o' te honest man, and al his clan, to let te Laidie Tooche mak him an eatible, forpye te travail to te repellion, tat was al a tead loss—and ten te traitor man, oomph! Cal ye tis a government, oomph,—mi Lord and Eerl—if tat's te way o' te laas, we'll al pe traitor man's, every mother's son of us—oomph!"

"No doubt, Glenfruin," replied the Earl, "it would be much more according to our good old Scottish customs, if less were demanded for the public, and"—

"Te public! mi Lord and Eerl," interrupted Glenfruin, giving an angry hotch in his chair, "what's te public, an what pe te goot o' te public to me? oomph! Sowlls and podies! it was te petter time for te honest man before tis public was porne."

"Yes," replied the Earl, "this same thing the public keeps many an honest man from his own out of respect to it—but, as true and leal subjects of the King, we must all forget our particular grievances. I am sure there is no man in the realm who has more reason to complain of the laws than I have."

"It's an och-hone, mi Lord and Eerl, tat ye were na te king yoursel."

"Glenfruin!" exclaimed the Earl, "Glenfruin! Do you mean to insult me, and endanger yourself by such language in this house?"

"My goot Lord and Eerl, we're no a sedition at al. Sowlls and podies! mi Lord and Eerl, would na ye hear a glorification, just in the way o' a congee—tat's al—Oomph."

"Well," said the Earl, not affecting to observe

the apology, "but what does Glenfruin mean by the Duchess of Albany being in custody?"

"Oo aye, will mi goot Lord and Eerl mak a cognition o' te Laidie Toochees? You see, when te Glenfruins were al come to te shore—al, every mother's son of us,—tere was a man, a laad frae mi Laidie Toochees,—and te man, he would tak te poat. Teevils in hell! ye'll no tak te poat,—curse tak me if you will. Put, for al tat, he was a speech, and so we came pe te wood o' te tree, and Nigel—he's a praw laad and prave laad, Nigel—he came in te poat—and here was my Laidie Toochees al py herself, and a laidie likewise on te stane, and so we made a captivitie; and Nigel, wi' te Laidie Toochees and her oold maiden madam, you see, mi Lord and Eerl, sailt in te poat to Glenfruin."

"Surely you have not seized the unfortunate Duchess without authority," exclaimed the Earl. "Know you not that the King has offered to restore her all the earldom of Lennox, which, however"—

"Al the eerldom!—oomph. Sowlls and podies! Is't te King a man wi' a sholder on a head? and will my Laidie Toochees pe making a lifting pack again o' te cows and te cattles, tat te Macfarlane—oomph. Got tamn te Macfarlane; he took te cows and cattle when te King made his judifications—oomph."

"Of course, Glenfruin," said the Earl, "you were too faithful a subject to herry the lands of Lennox at the time of forfeiture. But if the Macfarlane has done so, let him look to the consequences, unless he has a friend to appease the King."

Glenfruin was not quite easy in his mind at hearing the Earl speak in this manner, and, not well knowing what answer to make, he said—

"Put will na mi Lord and Eerl pe pleased to see te King's message tat pe in te hal?"

"If he be, as you seem to suppose, Sir Robert Græme, I am almost sorry," replied the Earl, "that he has been brought hither; as it was by my interference that his life was spared, and he ought not now to have been within the realm of Scotland."

"Sowlls and podies! where pe te goot service o' Glenfruin to get te King's penedictions in a palm o' land or te mark o' monies?—Oomph—oomph."

"Nevertheless," replied the Earl, "since he is now in custody, I will keep him a prisoner till I have the King's orders concerning him."

"And what will Glenfruin pe doing wi' te Laidie Tooche?—Sowlls and podies!—Oomph."

The Earl paused for a moment. He thought, if he advised the chieftain to restore her at once to liberty, the veteran would thereby pacify his Majesty's displeasure at the manner in which he had treated that disconsolate lady, but otherwise his sordid loyalty might be changed; and, as the thought presented itself, he turned away from Glenfruin and walked to the upper end of the gallery, where they held this discourse, saying in bitterness of heart to himself—

"Oh! cruel fate, hurry me not so fast; let me take time to breathe."

He then returned with quick steps to Glenfruin, and said—

"Sir Robert Græme is well known to all in my household, and I was already informed that he was your prisoner before you were admitted."

"Oomph," replied Glenfruin looking curiously from under his brows.

"Yes," rejoined the Earl; "but I do not wish to embroil myself further in the affairs of Græme. I give you leave to let him be held in custody here till the King's pleasure concerning him be known."

Græme had not, however, in the meantime been idle in his thoughts, and knowing the jeopardy wherein he stood, he had so addressed himself to Stuart, who on his being brought to the castle had gone to see him in the hall, as not only to move him to compassionate his condition, in the distemperature wherewith that ill-fated youth was at the time afflicted, but to make him cleave to the rebellious daring of his spirit.

The fancies of the outlaw were still tinged with the predictions of the Spæwife, and in his ruminations on entering the castle, he recollected that, from the time he had parted from her, three rivers he had crossed, and ascended and descended the hills between them; and he said to himself, "Atholl is the man by whom my lands are to be restored; his power with the King is the key of my castle, which, when I again possess, will indeed remain mine."

These reflections so wrought with him, that, while he was discoursing with Stuart, he beseeched him to ask the Earl, his uncle, to present a petition from him to the King. "I do not expect the restoration of my lands, nor shall I petition for that, but only remission of the banishment, that I may be free to enter into the vassalage of some generous patron."

There was no man of that time who could so eloquently enforce his argument as Sir Robert Græme, and the elocution with which he set forth this seeming lowly request, obtained a ready concurrence from Stuart, who not only assisted him in forthwith preparing the memorial of his professions of contrition for past offences, but in carrying it to the Earl; he added many things in the prisoner's behalf, expressing, however, his doubt if the King would grant any part of the humble boon solicited, and reverting, with sharp words, to the contumely, as he felt it, of the *King's treatment of himself*. The Earl, how-

ever, in taking the paper, said nothing ; but his countenance was pale, and his lips quivered ; and hastily putting it into his bosom, he retired into another apartment to conceal the agitation with which he was so very strangely affected.

CHAP. XXXIX.

WHILE Macdonald and his hasty adventure, so suddenly abandoned, was causing such molestation throughout the realm, and bringing so many fatal circumstances to a confluence, the Duchess of Albany, with her faithful companion, the aged Leddy Glenjuckie, was patiently wearing the time away in the castle of Glenfruin as a prisoner, under the watch and ward of Nigel and a party of the clansmen.

The Lady of Glenfruin and her two daughters, with many gentle ministrations, endeavoured to sweeten her captivity ; but to her Grace all things and all places were alike. Her prison-house was life ; and if at times she seemed to be touched with any sense of mortal sympathy, it was in the still of the golden evening, when she sat on the brow of the castle-hill, looking abroad on the tranquillity of the lake below, and listening to the mournful melody of some Highland sonnet and wailing coronach chanted by old Norah, as she teased her wool or twirled her distaff on the stone seat at the castle gate.

But Leddy Glenjuckie, who suffered no grief save that of pity for the misfortunes of her mistress, the which, like the sorrows of other waiting gentlewomen, was yielding to the balm of time, and save the occasional anguish of her own sciatica, passed the day with more variety. Having from her youth been habituated to the silken courtesies of a courtly life, she could ill abide the mountain fare and heather couches of Glen-

fruin's tower, and the offence which the yellow necks and bare red arms of his long and lean daughters gave to her delicate eyes at her arrival, was scarcely extenuated by the unmitigated civilities of their Highland kindness. For several days she fretted at their endeavours to be urbane and debonnaire, notwithstanding the manifest great pains which the efforts cost them ; and she often peevishly repulsed the condolence with which they brought frequent decoctions and many an arcanum of Celtic pharmacy, to appease the anguish of her sciatica.

- Custom, however, began at last to reconcile her to their defects and kindness ; and, in the end, the deference which they paid to her superiority was rewarded by affable tales concerning the revels and the banquets which she had formerly adorned. Then would she descant of the caskets of pearls and garnets, and the glittering robes, which she had left in the castle of Falkland ; telling them of things whereof they had not heard even the names, such as damask diapered with lilies, enamelled chainlets, pomelles, and purple palls ; and how, when she was a maid of honour to the Regent Robert's Duchess, Duke Murdoch's mother, she had a milk-white Spanish jennet trapped to the ground with velvet and cloth of gold ; nor did she forget the pretty page in his gay attire, that went with her when she took the pastime of hawking with the ladies of the court, carrying on his arm her eagl-ehorn and merlyon, with their silver bells. " But, well-a-day !" she would often in those pleasant rehearsals say with a sigh, " the decay of the world is plain to be seen.—Sir Penny has become the king of the earth ; and then she would recite with good emphasis, trippingly on the tongue, certain pithy morsels of the lay wherein his domination is celebrated, saying—

Popes, kings, and emperours,
 Bishops, abbots, and priours,
 Parson, priest, and knight,
 Dukes, earls, and ilk baroun,
 To serve him are they all boun,
 Both by day and night.

In the king's court it is no boot
 Against Sir Penny for to moot,
 So meikle is he of might;
 He is so witty and so strong,
 That be it never so mikle wrong,
 He will make it right.

Sir Penny over all gets the gree,
 Both in borough and in citie,
 In castle and in tower:
 Withouten either spear or shield,
 He is the best in frith or field,
 And stalwarthest in stour."

On these occasions the daughters of Glenfruin would beseech her to repeat the same till they got the rhymes by rote, it not being the custom in those days for young ladies of their degree, even of many degrees higher, to read the minstrelsy of books.

But Leddy Glenjuckie did not always seek to move her admiring auditors by instructive descants in the vein of Prince Achilles' complaint, to the which so many laureates in aftertimes have played the mumbling echo, some for mockery and some for moan, taking their text from those sad rhymes of the longest lay of the learned Lydgate:

"For like it is that all the gentle blood
 Throughout the world shall destroyed be,
 And rural folk (and that were great pitie)
 Shall have lordship and whole governance:
 And churles eke, with sorrow and mischance,
 In every land shall lordis be alone,
 And gentlemen be slain, all, every one."

Changing the key of her humour, and running the diapason of a livelier mood, she would then

rehearse the adventures of ladies and gallants, and other tenderlings, and quaintly tell of what mischanced to a fair damsel—

When she rose, that lady dear,
To take her leave of her squyere,—
All so naked as she was born,
She stood her chamber-door befor.

“Then,” said she, “was the time when it was worth something to be fair. I was not always gnawed by the sciatica. Time, that has since, with his cruel fingers, scratched so many furrows in these cheeks, was not always my foe. Well do I remember, when, as a champion, he challenged to prove my beauty without a marrow, on a day that was to come. And it did come, and many a stricken knight with a bleeding heart, lay at my feet.”

Then would she ever and anon give these simple damsels, who much marvelled to hear an ancient dame with a shaking head discourse with such juvenility, much sage counsel how to comport themselves in what she called the maiden’s war; telling them how the loathly woman won Sir Florent; citing many a delectable sentence from that pleasant romaunt, the which in those days was as familiar in the Lowland halls and bowers as ever the poesie of mightier minstrels hath since been.

But, albeit, that antique gentlewoman so vaunted of her victorious beauty, and so discoursed of stratagems of love, to these mountain maideus, yet was she in all points touching the moralities of demeanour singularly delicate, yea, most dainty and circumspect, else would not the Duchess of Albany have endured her services. There had chanced, however, a certain accident in her life, before she was married to the first of her four husbands, and by it, as an epoch, she was wont to date the occurrence

of events, saying, that such and such things had come to pass so long before or after her misfortune; which misfortune was a damage that she met with by the fall of a gallery, wherein she was sitting with other ladies of the court to see the joustings held at Perth, on the occasion of the coronation of King Robert the Second, and by which she was ever after crippled from dancing, to the great grief, according to her own rehearsal, of the King and all his nobles, so much did she excel in the art.

In this manner the time passed away with Leddy Glenjuckie till Glenfruin returned home; and a very wrothful and irascible man he was when he came, not only because he had found no rebellious town to indemnify his clansmen for the brisk loyalty with which they had obeyed the King's mandate to go against Macdonald, but also in consequence of the Earl of Atholl's doubts if his Majesty would be content to hear that the unfortunate Duchess was held as a prisoner in his castle. The consideration, also, with which the Earl and his nephew treated Sir Robert Græme did not content him; he not only expected that immediate execution would have been done on the outlaw, but had cherished the hope, that, for the notable service he had himself rendered to the State in bringing him in, no question would be made about granting the pendicle of the earldom of Lennox, which lay so conveniently to augment his estate.

"Sowlls and podies, Nigel!" said he to his son, in relating the adventure, "Isn't a shame and a fye tat we will pe come pack wi' te meal for te forty days, al in our pellites, and no a sheep nor a shelty for te rewart?—Oomph."

But Nigel, instead of sympathizing with his disappointment, or the impoverishment which *the clan had so unprofitably sustained in the expedition*, began to speak in very tender and

compassionate terms of the Duchess, and to suggest, that as her detention might not be agreeable to the King, it would be expedient to carry her, as soon as possible, in a befitting manner, to the summer bower in Inchmurrin.

The old man looked at him with a stern eye from under his brows, crooking his head like a ram preparing to assault an adversary.

"Aye, aye, Nigel, and so ye would be sending te Laidie Tooche wi' a gallantrie—Oomph. Has she te rings or te gold for te ransom?—Oomph."

At this juncture of their conversation, Leddy Glenjuckie, who had been forth an airing on the castle-hill when he returned, came into the hall, leaning, because of her sciatica, on the arms of his daughters. As she passed towards the stair to ascend into the apartment where the Duchess was sitting alone,—the Lady of Glenfruin being busy with Norah in another apartment, seething worsted with chips of oak and rusty swords for a blue dye,—Glenfruin turned round on the bench in the chimney-corner where he was sitting, and said—

"Mi oold Laidie-matam, and will te penalties in your pack pe no petter at al?—Oomph."

Leddy Glenjuckie, who had never been afflicted with such a salutation, dropped the arms of her supporters, and looked as if she beheld some shaggy boar, or other uncouth felon of the woods. Glenfruin however intended to be courteous, in order that no complaint might afterwards be made by the prisoners to his prejudice, and he added—

"It's an och-hon, mi Laidie-matam, to see tat ye're al a crook like te hoop o' te new moon—Oomph."

At these words. Leddy Glenjuckie tartly took *his* daughters again by the arms, and with short quick steps, tottled as fast as she could to the

foot of the stairs. Glenfruin, quite unconscious of any offence, rose and advanced to proffer his gallant assistance to help her up ; but, shrinking from any ministration of his civility, she looked over her shoulder, trembling at once with anger and fear, and exclaimed—

“ I have never been so insulted since I had my misfortune ? ”

“ Sowlls, podies ! misfortune !—oomph ! was it a son or a taughter ?—Oomph. ”

What might have ensued it were vain to imagine, for at that moment the shrill sound of a bugle-horn at the castle-gate drowned her scream ; and Glenfruin, with Nigel and all the sorners in the hall, hastened to see what stranger so chivalarously demanded entrance.

CHAP. XL.

IN the mean time the Lord James, after the breaking up of Macdonald's enterprise, became very despondent of his fortunes, and was grieved, even to that sickness of the heart which is of a keener pang than the anguish of wounds, by the reported inconstancy of the Lady Sibilla.

In the morning when he saw the clansmen of the Isles departing homeward, and all the array that had come to maintain his cause melting away, he stood alone on the side of Craig Phatric, and, meditating on the eclipse of his father's house, resolved to leave the Scottish strand for ever, and to sail to the isle of Rhodes, there to seek admission into the brotherhood of the knights of St. John. And it chanced that, while he was in this forlorn and disconsolate state, Celestine of Loch Aw, a kinsman of his own, suddenly appeared coming from the bottom of the hill.

The mother of this Celestine, being the daughter of the Regent Robert, was aunt to the outlaw, and her son had inherited from her the partialities and affections of the Albanies; but his father, Sir Duncan Campbell, was a warrior of renowned royalty, and in all things a firm upholder of the King's administration.

It chanced, that when the tidings of the Lord James' arrival at Inverlochy from Ireland reached Celestine, that he was hunting the red deer on Ben Cruachan, with but a few followers; and on the pretext of still pursuing the chase, he

passed the mountains at the head of Loch Rannoch, and skirting the country to the north of Loch Erich, had only that morning come from Dalwhinnie to the camp; so that the Lord James, on being told his name, though he joined hands with him as a kinsman, knew not in what way his affections leant; and he was the more disposed to distrust him, seeing him alone and in the garb of a hunter, because of the notour devotion to the King which his father, Sir Duncan Campbell, cherished. He would therefore have gladly avoided him; but the melancholious manner in which Celestine had seen him standing alone, leaning on the hilt of his broad-sword, much moved the young chieftain of the Campbells, and he not only tried to cheer him with many exhortations to constancy of mind, but with anticipations of better chances in the affection of undivulged friends.

"I see not," said he, "your condition in so dismal a plight. Come with me to Kilchurn Castle, for my father is now with the King at Edinburgh. There, as you are unknown, you may for a time abide in security, till we hear what good fortune is yet in store for you."

But the Lord James replied, "How may I trust myself in the hands of the Campbells, whose chief, your father, is well known to be as it were a very part of the King himself? No, truly, my kind cousin, it were now a mad and vain thing of me to attempt any enterprise in Scotland; I feel that I am indeed an outlaw—the curse of excommunication has taken effect upon me. I am a shunned thing, and no one prospers that shares in the chances of my fortune."

"I do not invite you," said Celestine, "to any adventure, but only to take shelter in Kilchurn till the blast and the shower have a little abated; *and safely you may so do, for there is not a man*

ever, in taking the paper, said nothing ; but his countenance was pale, and his lips quivered ; and hastily putting it into his bosom, he retired into another apartment to conceal the agitation with which he was so very strangely affected.

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ment heard ought of this intention, started, and had almost forgotten the part of Sir Aulay Macaulay; but the Lady suddenly and secretly touched him on the arm, and with a look that made him on the instant distrust the honesty of his friend Celestine, put him on his guard.

"The King," said he, "could do nothing more gracious. The Duchess"—

He would have added some commiserative sentiment on the woful and dejected condition of his mother, but the remembrance of the fate of his father and brothers rushed upon him, and he was obliged to turn aside to conceal his agitation and sorrow.

Celestine saw his emotion, and would have immediately disclosed the secret to his mother, but at that moment a messenger came into the chamber with letters from Sir Duncan, saying how much he took it to heart to hear it reported that their son Celestine had joined Macdonald at Inverness, and praying it might not be so; telling her, at the same time, in what manner the rebellious chieftain had come secretly to Holyrood-house, and had there thrown himself upon the King's mercy.

Seeing her son then present, and having received no sign nor intimation from him to make her think he had embarked in the rebellion, at the same time fearful lest the stranger should be indeed Sir Aulay Macaulay, she did not venture to say or do any thing that might bring on a disclosure from Celestine; for the rebellion being ended by the manner in which Macdonald had surrendered himself, it became necessary to keep the secrets of those who had engaged in it; and she knew not how Sir Aulay Macaulay stood affected, either with respect to the King or to the Albanies. All this caused a sudden air of restraint and embarrassment to become visible in her demeanour, and she gave the letter to Cele-

tine in so particular a manner, that he retired towards a window to read it apart.

The Lord James remarked what was passing, and seeing mystery and the interchange of expressive looks between the Lady and her son, became uneasy, and doubted the safety that he had been promised; and his apprehensions were augmented almost to alarm by the Lady, while Celestine was reading the letter in the window-bower, coming to him, and saying softly, that she might not be overheard—

“ You know, Sir Aulay, that Duke Murdoch was my brother, and therefore I beseech you, if you have heard any tidings of the Lord James, to let me know what you have heard ? ”

These words she accompanied with so much of tenderness and grief in her voice, and a look so much more pregnant than her words, that he could not but discern she had discovered him; while, by what he had noted, he was led to think she desired it might still be thought that she knew him not. Instead, therefore, of making any reply, he took her hastily by the hand, and, glancing with alarm towards Celestine, said to her in a whisper, “ Save me ! ”

• Knowing how much her son leant to her affections for the relics of her father’s family, she would have assured the Lord James that he was safe to trust himself with Celestine, whom she now supposed entirely ignorant of his true name and condition; but the rebellion being over, and the rigour of the King’s justice having taught her to dread the consequences that might ensue to those who had taken any part in it, and anxious to keep Celestine free from all suspicion of blame, believing that the rumour of his having been at Inverness was unfounded, she deemed it prudent to allow him to remain in his *supposed* ignorance, and still to affect to treat her *nephew* as Sir Aulay Macaulay. Accordingly,

when she perceived that Celestine had made an end of reading his father's letter, she said to him—

“I beseech you to call home your brothers, Colin, and Galespic, whom I see yonder in a boat on the loch by themselves. Go, I beg, for they are yet but mere boys, and the wind is strong and their sail broad.”

Celestine looked from the window, and saw his brothers, but in no such jeopardy as his mother seemed to fear. She, however, feigned to be still more alarmed, in so much, that he was obliged to go hastily, leaving the Lord James alone with her. Her anxiety was however but a device, to procure an opportunity of conferring with her nephew in secret, and also to remove her son from the danger of being accused of abetting in any manner his outlawed and sentenced kinsman.

“This house,” said she, the moment they were by themselves, “is no place for you.” And then with a hasty summons, she called Father Donich, her confessor, and chaplain, whom, with a brief injunction, she desired to convey him, unobserved if possible, to his cell on Inish Ail, one of the small islands in the lake. “He will remain with you there till I have time, before the evening, to devise some way of conducting him to a place of greater security.”

The weight of his misfortunes so pressed upon the spirit of the Lord James, when he found himself betrayed, as he thought, by the perfidy of his kinsman, into a place of danger, that he parted listlessly from the Lady of Loch Aw, and followed the old monk out of the castle, heedless and almost unconscious of the way he went. But they had not proceeded far, till indignation against his treacherous kinsman, as he deemed Celestine, roused his spirit, and perceiving that there was faith and truth in the character of

Father Donich, he disclosed himself to him ; and after some controversy, wherein the chaplain urged him to trust to the Lady of Loch Aw, it was agreed that they should travel into Lennoxshire together.

CHAP. XLI.

THE King's counsellors, with Sir William Chrichton the Chancellor, having, in the meanwhile, determined that Macdonald should be held in durance, he was sent a close prisoner to the fortalice of Tantallon; and the court thereafter moved from Edinburgh to Scone, where the clergy in great numbers, with Bishop Wardlaw at their head, came flocking to congratulate his Majesty on the speedy dissolution of the rebellion.

"All temporal concerns," said the Bishop, "are flourishing with a great prosperity under the benign influence of your Majesty's fostering wisdom, but things of eternal import are perishing without succour. The abbeys, that were plundered in the misrule which so long afflicted this poor realm, are still in ruins; and in the roofless churches the owl still worships desolation on those altars where holy men should serve the mass. Alas! many houses of piety, reared by that blessed monarch, your sainted ancestor King David the First, have become the habitations of doleful creatures."

"Yes," replied his Majesty, "that same blessed monarch was a costly saint to the crown; he scarcely left his sinful successors wherewithal to purchase a pardon."

Many of the churchmen, hearing his Majesty speak with this seeming irreverence of the holiest of all his royal ancestors, lifted up their hands and rolled their eyes, and some among

them were in great ire. The which being observed by the King, he added—

“My good Bishop Wardlaw, I say not this out of any lack of respect towards the church; for there is not one of all your brethren, whether he wear mitre or cowl, that more truly reveres the blissful tidings of religion, than does the sinner who now speaks to you; but to pierce the heavens with golden pinnacles, like our holy ancestor, is not, in my poor judgment, the best way to gain admission; yet something is due from me, in token of gratitude for the success which has hitherto crowned my endeavours to resuscitate justice and the renovation of law in Scotland; and I shall speedily evince the sincerity of my desire to prove that this is no profession of idle courtesy.”

These words were comfortable in the ears of the churchmen, and so emboldened the Superior of the Black Friars of Dumbarton, that he ettled forward, and said—

“But it is not enough for your Majesty to consider only the condition of the religious houses; we beseech you to look at the great molestation which we sustain in our goods and persons. Many laics meddle with things ecclesiastical in a way never before heard of in any Christian land. There was a pious brother of my house, by name Father Mungo—O! he was a precious vessel, a light and an ornament to all the church.”

“What of him?” said the King.

“On the very same night in which your Majesty so happily rescued the town of Dumbarton from the Lord James, an uncircumcised Highland schore put him to death. Whether his martyrdom was by tree or by steel, by flood or by fire, we have never learnt, being in no condition to bring the criminal to justice.”

“On that night!” said his Majesty thought-

fully.—“Did the friar of whom you speak belong to Bishop Finlay’s friends? for you know, Father, that it has been quite as much the custom for ecclesiastics to meddle with things secular, as for laics to meddle with things ecclesiastical.”

“O, no!” replied the Prior of the Black Friars—“Father Mungo was a guileless saint. He was not a man that would have joined himself to any plot of such a traitor as Bishop Finlay.”

“Then perhaps he was on our side? and the chieftain—what was his name?”

“Glenfruin.”

“Glenfruin!—was he engaged in that rebellion?—Surely I have heard this story before.”

“That were a hard thing to say; for, at least, he took no open part in the work.”

The King made no remark on this; but for a short space communed with himself, and then said—

“But, however it may have been with Glenfruin, it is not fit that such irresponsible justice should be executed on any man, far less on a reverend churchman. We shall give orders to sift this matter, and Glenfruin shall be made to account for what he has done.”

His Majesty then taking Bishop Wardlaw aside, while those who had come into the presence with him were retiring, informed him, that he was minded to found a house to the glory of God in the city of Perth, and commanded him to remain at Scone until the needful preparations were made.

Now it came to pass, as they were discoursing of this matter together, that the Earl of Atholl came into the chamber with the petition of Sir Robert Græme in his hand, and went towards the King to present it. His Majesty observing him, said, with his freest urbanity—

"What great favour would our good uncle, that he comes to us with such elaboration of homage? This is something, my Lord, that you either fear will not be granted, or think should not." With these words his Majesty took the paper from the Earl; but when, at the first glance, he saw it was a petition for the remission of a punishment, he folded it up, and said gravely—

"I am grieved, my Lord, to refuse any solicitation preferred by you; but the time has not yet come when a recorded sentence may be rescinded in Scotland. Here have just been the heads of the church, complaining of what they still suffer from the misrule and tyranny of those to whom power has been unwisely delegated. Take back the paper; I have not even looked at the name of the petitioner."

"My gracious Liege," exclaimed the Earl, moving, as if averse to receive the petition.

"I am not to be entreated in such things," said the King severely: "I have told you, that till I have searched those evils to their source, which have made this unhappy kingdom one constant theatre of crime, I shall esteem myself, even with all endeavour to the contrary, but as a candidate on probation for the great office to which Providence has called me."

"From whom is the petition?" said Bishop Wardlaw apart; for his Majesty in so speaking, had turned away.

"From my kinsman, Sir Robert Græme."

"Do you, my Lord," exclaimed the Bishop, amazed to hear this,—*"do you petition for a pardon to him?"*

The King having partly overheard the Bishop's words, turned quickly round, and said—

"Who is the petitioner?"

"A bold and dangerous man," replied the Earl, scarcely aware of what he said, so much

had the sharp speech and keen look of Bishop Wardlaw disturbed the resolution wherewith he had prepared himself for the interview.

"And for these qualities," exclaimed his Majesty, "would you ask his pardon? Tell me at once that he is the King of Scotland, and that we are but permitted to hold the crown through his forbearance. Let me never hear such words again. Eighteen years, with the name of prisoner, I was exiled from my rights, and in that time crimes were allowed to grow to customs among you.—How am I aided in the endeavour to lessen such misery, when great and good men like you, Lord Atholl, set yourselves forward as the advocates of bold and dangerous offenders. It chafes my very heart, to think that there is never to be an end to the habitude of misrule, which has made the name of the wild Scot a proverb for shame throughout Christendom. But what is your friend called?"

"He is no friend of mine," replied the Earl diffidently; "the petition is from Sir Robert Græme."

"Sir Robert Græme! I have ever repented the indulgence shown to that man. It haunts me," said the King, "like the memory of a foul deed in a troubled conscience; it comes upon my spirit at times like the fear that is said to follow guilt. And you, my Lord, who were so opposed to that indulgence, how is it that you now would sue for his pardon? I have no taint of superstition, but such accidents seem almost portentous."

Bishop Wardlaw, who had stood surprised to observe the King in this mood, turned to the Earl, and added—

"It was an evil hour, and under some malignant planet, when you ravelled yourself with the knotted yarn of that bad man's destiny."

The Earl trembled, and became pale, and

could not for some time master the perturbation into which he was thrown by these chidings.

The King, seeing his agitation, softened his voice, and said to him in a soothing manner,—

“But I doubt not that, in all things, you have ever considered what at the time was best; and though no good has come, or can come, from the lenity shown to Sir Robert Græne, yet I do acquit you, my Lord, of all blame with respect to it. Not so, however, with respect to this; though to say truly, I know not well wherefore, and, with as little reason it is perhaps, that I say I wish you had not mingled the honours and merits of your own unblemished life with the devices and crimes of that stubborn traitor.”

“How is it,” said the Earl composedly, “that, while your Majesty says my life has been unblemished, occasion is taken from the case of an unfortunate kinsman to subject me to a degree of reproof, as if I had myself in some way offended. My Lord Bishop here is a pious and an honest man. I should have felt contrition, could I have even in thought, questioned his integrity. He is building a fair and stately college at St. Andrews; he chants and attends mass; not a priest of the church is more exemplary: I have never heard that the merits of his virtues and endeavours have laid him open to any suspicion.”

“My Lord—Lord Atholl,” said the King, raising his left hand, as if he would have delivered a rebuke or an admonition; but suddenly dropping it, he added—“Surely I cannot have incurred the displeasure of my good uncle, whom ever since I came into this kingdom, which I do verily think holds one continued earthquake from the border to the utmost cape of the north, I have found the most discreet and freest spoken of all my friends. But my choler was moved at hearing the saucy complaints of those churchmen

against the meddling of the laity, even in a case of treason, wherein an audacious priest, I mean Bishop Finlay, was the chief instigator and mainspring of rebellion. If I have spoken hastily, my Lord, beshrew me if I shall not be most eager to manifest my contrition. But, Sir Robert Græme—why have you come to me with any cause of his? why rather, I should say, have you taken such an infection from his seditious spirit, as to ask me to remit his sentence,—a sentence which, at the time, neither my own mind, nor the judgment of the wisest of my council, approved, for it went upon the notion that he might become an honest man? However, to say no more of that, as it is impossible for the King's arms, long as they may be, to reach to every quarter, I wish you, and such noblemen as are of unquestionable fidelity, to repair again to your several castles, and each, within his own province, emulate the administration which we intend to exercise in ours. Know you any thing of a chieftain in Lennox called Glenfruin?"

"I have heard of him," replied the Earl, "and it is said that he holds the unfortunate Duchess of Albany prisoner, in order to extort a ransom for her deliverance."

"When did you hear this? why was not I sooner told?" exclaimed the King. "Could you come here to petition for a traitor, like Sir Robert Græme, and know that so noble a lady was in the reverence of such a barbarian? for nothing less can I account this Glenfruin, who, out of his own caprice, committed martyrdom on an innocent, holy, and blameless friar. You ought, my Lord, to have told me of this first. I will listen to no question till orders are sent for the deliverance of the Duchess of Albany."

"I beseech your Majesty for one word," replied the Earl; "Glenfruin is a staunch and true subject."

"Then let it be shown that he respects justice—justice, which to the sacrifice of my own sentiments as a man, I have so strenuously endeavoured to revive. I have, my Lord, not spared, in that endeavour, the greatest and the most honoured of my own kinsmen; and the principle that made me bring them to the scaffold is not impaired, nor, while I retain that sense of my royal office with which I returned into this realm, will I allow it to suffer any occultation."

The Earl, though awed by the vehemence of his Majesty, yet retained his self-possession, and said—

"It belongs not to me to execute whatever may be your Majesty's pleasure upon Glenfruin, or upon any other of the untractable chieftains, but in my own country I shall not be found wanting in my duty."

"Then go to your own country," said the King abruptly, "and see that it is so. But in a moment his Majesty felt that he had dealt hardly towards so venerable and esteemed a person as the Earl of Atholl, and he added—

"I would, my Lord, that I could endure these things more patiently. But good Bishop Wardlaw here knows, that the manifold complaints with which I am beset, and they are all just, gall my very spirit; for I am a young man, and the old are too prone to their own sordid intents to lend me that true help, by which alone I can hope to overcome the difficulties wherewith my royal estate is environed. Yet I will put no harder task upon you, than this simple request,—Go to your own castle, and be there the same discreet, wise, and just man that I have ever thought and found you, but have no more dealings or correspondence with Sir Robert Græme."

The Earl, without making any answer, hum-

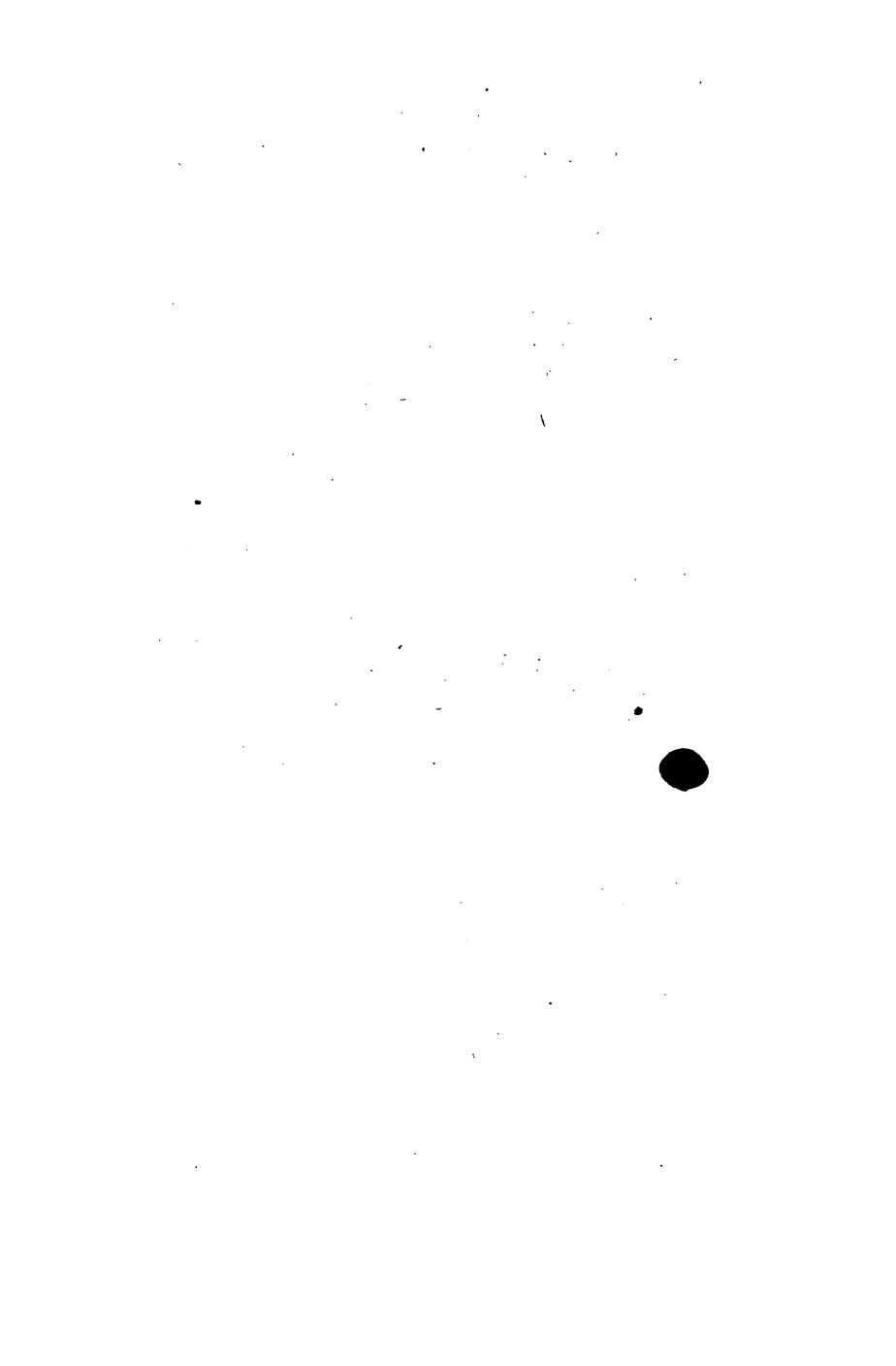
bly retired; and when he was gone, the King said to Bishop Wardlaw—

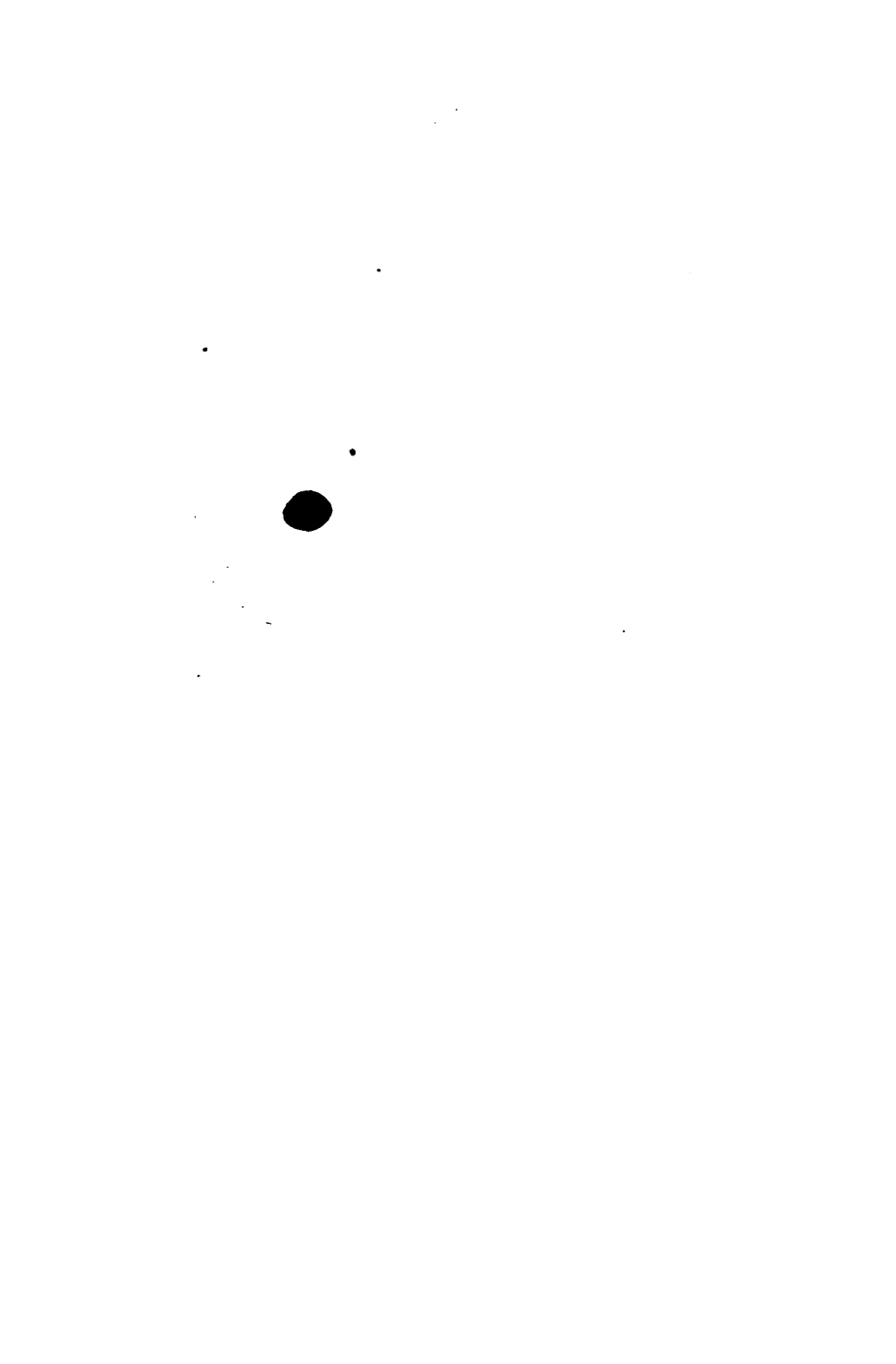
“I know not wherefore it is that I have been so moved by this matter; but the moment that the Earl presented yon paper, I felt as if an irresistible influence caused some hidden antipathy of my nature to awake, and I became, as it were, wroth towards him, not having any sufficient cause to be so; for, after all, what he did was but in Christian charity. I pray that no harm come to him from Sir Robert Græme.”

“Amen!” responded the Bishop piously. The King, however, instead of continuing the conversation, moved thoughtfully towards the door which led into his privy-chamber; but before going in he turned round and said—

“That business of Glenfruin and the monk shall be speedily investigated. I now remember, it was the lady Sibilla who told me something of the matter, but not as the prior has stated it. But, truly, I am more disturbed that he should have dared to touch the Duchess, than for the offence he has given to the church. But we shall know the truth without loss of time; for this very night I will summon him before us.”

So saying his Majesty withdrew; and the same evening a herald, with horn and mantle, was sent to the castle of Glenfruin to bring that chief before the King in council.





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